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ROMANCE

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The Tales of the New York Story Club

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vol. 1

IN ROMANCE FOR MARCH WILL BE BEGUN A SERIAL STORY BASED ON REAL INCIDENTS IN AMERICAN LIFE, BY A NEW WRITER, WHO, IT IS SAFE TO PREDICT, WILL PROVOKE THE HIGHEST PRAISE AND GIVE GREAT PLEASURE.

The master hand at keeping the reader in suspense —the best writer of one kind of stories, in fact, that we now have—is the author of this from the San Francisco *Examiner*.

TOLD BY A SKELETON.

THERE is an old half-effaced trail among the rocky canyons of the Arizona mountains between Eagle Creek and Rio Prieto. It is a lonely place, with nothing but cactus and the cliff grass for verdure. It is deathly still. There seems to be no life anywhere among those tumbled crags. But pass along the trail, upset a bowlder, throw a rock into a clump of the cliff grass, you will see something alive. Coiled in the dark places are great diamond-backed rattlesnakes. Disturb one of them and the whole dell will hum with the music of the castanets.

In the bed of the canyon, just above the wash-line, are some bones, polished by the drift of the river, bleached by the fierce sun for years. As you pass from the middle of the heap of ribs, comes the warning rattle of one of the deadly denizens of the glen. The remains of a pack-saddle are there and what might once have been the pack. There is a fragment of blanket with U. S. on it. Near by is the rusted steel of a Winchester rifle. Examine it, and you will find that still sticking fast in the breech is a green and mouldy cartridge.

That tells the story.

Some time back, when this glen, alive with rattlesnakes, was even lonelier and farther out of the world than it is now, some prospector, deserter, or hunter came there driving his pack-mule.

Fifty yards away from the whitening bones, behind that bowlder that juts from the cliff, some empty rifle shells are scattered. There are more of them concealed by that patch of greenwood, and still others among the rocks on the hillside.

Did the traveller with the army blanket know that he was travelling on the hidden trail that only the Apaches knew—that puzzling round-about path that started north and turned back south, the road by which the San Carlos Indians found their way unmolested to the Mexican Sierra Madre, though the soldiers were all around?

The story is written in what was left in the glen.

The Indians saw the white man come around the bend of the hill far above. The canyon was a perfect place for ambush. Riding in the stillness is drowsy work. The solitary prospector comes on with his rifle hanging carelessly before him. Down the trail he comes, past the grease-wood patch to the water-hole in the gully. His animals are hot and tired. He loosens the girth and leads them to the pool.

Out of the quiet, crashing like a thunder-clap, comes the first shot. He springs to his horse and his rifle flies to his shoulder. He knows what has happened, and knows that unless his horse can carry him back through a storm of bullets the way he came he has passed his last day on earth.

But the sudden shot has startled the horse. A jerk has freed the bridle and in an instant he is galloping up the hill, the saddle turning under him.

Then it is die game or die coward.

The white man jerks the lever of his Winchester. The cartridge catches—a twig has perhaps got in among the bearings.

They see that he cannot shoot—his pistol went off with the saddle and now he is standing unarmed among the jeering Indians.

There are no white man's bones by the skeleton of the pack-mule. Die game or die coward! It was no easy, quick death by a bullet that the man who tied that pack had to meet.

Quarter of a mile down the canyon that trail runs up on to a knoll. Down there are bones. A skull is there with its face buried in the soil. Those little lumps made the spine of the man who was caught in the ambush.

If you search close you will find the rest of the man's frame stretched out there.

What was once a rope is there. It is knotted back of the skull and the other end is fast in the bush. If you cared to scratch among those bones you would find some small strips of rawhide. He died with his hands fast behind him.

But what is this lace-like line and delicate frame-work of slender bone that lies close to the skull?

* * * * * *

When the Apaches closed in on their victim he fought

hard. But how long can one man fight against a score?

Struggle as he will, he is soon overcome, and, with his hands bound so tight that the cords cut into them, they force him ahead of them up the knoll.

They find a bush strong enough to hold him, and with his own lash-rope they tie him to it. But four feet of slack rope is between him and the stake. Even with his hands tied behind him he might be able to free himself, so they force him to the ground and tie his feet to another stake.

If they simply meant to leave him there to starve and die under the hot skies they would have maimed his feet and maybe hands. There would be no need of tying him.

A shout from some of the Indians makes him try to look up. Some of them are coming toward him. They have a stick with a little noose on the end and in the noose is one of the rattlesnakes of the rocks. Now he knows how they are going to kill him. Through the skin and muscles of the snake close to the rattles they put two long, thin buckskin thongs. The serpent squirms with the pain of it, but they hold his head fast in the loop. They tie the loose ends of the thongs around the stake and jump back. The snake is free from the noose, but bound fast by the cords through its tail.

Directly before it is the face of the white man. In an instant the snake is in a half coil, his rattles going faster and faster.

The prostrate man closes his eyes. Maybe he screamed, maybe he fainted, maybe he simply waited for the feel of the serpent's fangs.

Like a flash the flat head of the snake shoots out. The cord stood its spring. It falls two inches short of the white face.

Two tiny liquid drops come against his face and run down into his beard. It is the venom from the fangs that failed to reach. The Indians roar with laughter.

But they have wasted much time. The troops are after them. They pick their victim, they tease the snake, and then leave him.

All the hot afternoon he lies there, the snake's head playing before his eyes, more of the venom being spat into his face.

The sun set and the clouds covered the heavens.

The snake has learned that it cannot reach that face. It lies coiled at the foot of the stake watching. For a while longer it strikes whenever the man moves his head, but after a while it lies in its sullen coil.

Oh, the strain of holding his head back, back, until the cords fairly crack! How long was it before his mind gave way and madness released him from his deadly terror?

Now the rain begins to fall and it is growing dark. The coolness revives the man, but still before him he sees those coils and that flat head. The snake's line-like tongue is darting out; he will try it again.

He strikes, but still he cannot reach. An inch more and his fangs would have reached the bound man.

He rubs his face in the dirt to clear it of that horrible poison that is thickening on it.

Still it rains; it is so dark that he cannot see the snake; but the rattle tells him that it is still there.

He must have been unconscious, but he wakes up and feels the strain of the rope. He has been pulling back on it with all his force, but now he feels a counter-pull that draws him toward the rattlesnake and death.

Why doesn't he push his face within reach of the snake and end it? He knew he was going to die from the moment his rifle failed to work. He knows that he must die of thirst, even if the snake does not reach him.

But he cannot do it. His mad brain refuses to order the muscles to meet the snake.

The rope pulls harder. He knows now. The rain is wetting it and shrinking it. It will drag him up. Two inches more is death.

He digs his toes into the ground. He pulls back until the rope sinks into his flesh. The rope gets shorter.

The rain has wet the buckskin thongs that hold the snake. The buckskin swells and stretches, while the hempen rope shrinks. Those cords that hold the snake are four inches longer than they were when they were tied. The rope has shrunk half as much.

The snake tries to crawl away. The strings in its flesh hold it back. The pain enrages it and it strikes.

The coyotes prowl about the spot; the vultures hover over it. The white skull lies with its face in the dust and the dry, lace-like snake skin, with the delicate bones below, lie against it.

The beautiful and perfectly simple love-story, without silliness or conventionalities or morbidness, is the rarest kind of stories in the Club's whole collection. But there is no such story in modern literature prettier than this simple little one by Alphonse Daudet.

LOVE AND STARS.

When I watched the flock upon the Luberon I remained whole weeks without seeing a living soul, alone in the pasturage with my dog Labri and my sheep. From time to time the hermit of Mont de l'Ure passed there to look for medicinal herbs, or I saw the black face of some Piedmont collier; but they were simple souls, silent by dint of solitude, having lost the taste for talking and knowing nothing of what was said down in the villages and towns. Hence every two weeks, when I heard upon the ascending highway the bells of our farm mule, bringing me my provisions for the coming fortnight, and saw gradually appear from below, the lively countenance of the little farm boy or the red locks of old Aunt Norade, I was indeed delighted. I made the visitor tell me the news of the country at the foot of the mountain—the baptisms, the marriages, but that which interested me most of all was what had happened to my master's daughter, our Demoiselle Stephanette, the prettiest girl for ten leagues around.

Without appearing to be too much bent upon acquiring this knowledge I gathered information as to whether she went a great deal to parties and evening assemblies; whether new admirers were still thronging about her, and should you ask me what good those details could do me, a poor shepherd of the mountain, I will reply that I was twenty years old, and that Stephanette was in my eyes the handsomest creature on the face of God's earth.

Now, one Sunday when I was waiting for my provisions, it so chanced that they did not arrive until very late. In the morning I said to myself: "It is the fault of the high mass;" then toward noon a heavy storm came on and I thought that the mule had been unable to set out because of the bad condition of the road. At last, about three o'clock in the afternoon, the sky

having cleared and the mountain being all of a glitter with water and sunlight, I heard, amid the droppings from the leaves and the overflowing of the swollen brooks, the bells of the mule, as gay and brisk as a grand church chime on Easter day.

But it was neither the little farm boy nor old Aunt Norade who was urging the animal along. It was—guess who? Our demoiselle, my friends—our demoiselle herself, seated right between the osier baskets, all rosy with the mountain air and the coolness brought on by the storm.

The little farm boy was sick; Aunt Norade was absent on a holiday visit to her children. Pretty Stephanette told me all this as she sprang down from her mule, and also that she was late in arriving because she had lost her way. But to see her so finely dressed, with her flowered ribbons, her brilliant skirt and her lace, she had rather the air of having lingered at some dance than of having sought for her road among the bushes.

Oh, the delicious creature! My eyes could not grow weary of gazing at her. It is true that I had never seen her so near. Sometimes during the winter, when the flock had gone down into the plain and I had returned in the evening to the farm-house to sup, she passed briskly through the hall, without talking much to the servants, always bedecked and a trifle haughty. Now I had her there before me, for myself alone. Was it not enough to turn my head?

When she had taken the provisions from the basket Stephanette began to look curiously around her. Raising a little her Sunday skirt, that might otherwise have become stained with mud, she entered the fold. She wished to see the corner where I slept, the pile of straw that was my bed, my sheepskin covering, my big cape hung against the wall, my crook and my flintlock gun. All this amused her.

"So it is here you live, is it, my poor shepherd?" said she, with a heavenly smile. "How tired you must get of always being alone. What do you do? What do you think about?"

I had a strong desire to reply, "About you, mistress," and I should have told the truth, but my confusion was so great that I could not find a single word. I think she noticed this, and that the mischievous creature took

pleasure in redoubling my embarrassment with her roguery.

"And your sweetheart, shepherd?" continued she. "Does she climb up here to see you sometimes? Surely she must be the Golden Goat or the Fairy Esterelle, who skips only over the summits of the mountains." And she herself, as she spoke thus to me, had the very air of the Fairy Esterelle, with her lovely head thrown back, the pearly laughter rippling from her cherry lips, and her haste to depart that made her visit seem like a dazzling vision.

"Adieu, shepherd!"

"Adieu, mistress!"

And she was gone, bearing away with her the empty baskets.

When the descending road hid her from sight it seemed to me that the stones rolling beneath the shoes of the mule were falling one by one upon my heart. I heard them a long, long time, and until the close of the day I was like one wrapped in a sweet slumber, fearing to stir lest I might drive away my dream.

Toward evening, as the depths of the valley began to grow blue and as the sheep huddled together, bleating to return to the fold, I heard some one call me down the road and saw reappear our demoiselle, no longer smiling as I had seen her a short time before, but trembling with cold, fear, and wet. It seems that at the base of the mountain she had found the Sorgue terribly swollen by the recent rain, and that in making a desperate effort to cross it she had nearly been drowned.

The most dreadful thing of all was that at this hour of the night she could not think of attempting to return to the farm, for our demoiselle by herself could never find the way by the short cut and I could not leave the flock. The idea of passing the night upon the mountain tormented her almost to madness, particularly on account of the uneasiness her family would feel. As for me, I reassured her the best I was able.

"In July the nights are short, mistress," said I. "It will hardly seem more than a wretched moment."

And I quickly kindled a roaring fire to dry her feet and her dress all soaked with the water of the Sorgue. Afterward I placed before her milk and sheep's milk cheese, but the poor demoiselle did not think either of

warming herself or of eating, and at the sight of the big tears that gathered in her eyes I felt like weeping myself.

Meanwhile the night had come on apace. There remained upon the crests of the mountains only a sprinkle of sun, a vapory light toward the west. I invited our demoiselle to enter the fold and sleep. Having spread a handsome new sheepskin over the clean straw, I bade her good-night, and, going out into the open air, seated myself before the door. God is my witness that, despite the fire of love that was scorching my blood, no evil thought came to me, nothing but an overpowering pride at thinking that in a corner of the fold, close beside the curious flock that stared at her as she lay asleep, my master's daughter—like a sheep more precious and whiter than all the rest—was reposing, intrusted to my care.

Never had the heavens appeared to possess such depths, never had the stars seemed so brilliant. Suddenly the door of the fold opened and pretty Stephanette made her appearance. She could not sleep. The animals rattled the straw as they moved about, or bleated in their dreams. She preferred to come to the fire. Seeing this, I cast my sheepskin over her shoulders. I stirred up the flames and we sat down side by side, remaining thus without uttering a single word.

If you have ever passed a night in the open air you know that at the hour when we sleep a mysterious world awakes amid the solitude and the silence. Then the brooks sing in their clearest tones and the ponds are lighted up with tiny flames. All the spirits of the mountain freely come and go; there is a rustling in the air; there are almost imperceptible sounds, as if we heard the tree branches growing and the grass springing up. Day is the life of creatures, but night is the life of things. When one is not accustomed to this it fills one with fear. Therefore our demoiselle was all of a quiver and clung to me closely at the slightest noise.

At one time, a long melancholy cry arose from the pond that sparkled below us and came rolling upward to our ears. At the same instant a beautiful shooting star glided over our heads in the same direction, as if the lamentation we heard were bearing a flash of light with it.

"What is that?" asked Stephanette in a whisper.

"A soul entering paradise, mistress!" answered I, making the sign of the cross.

She made the same sign and, for a moment, gazed meditatively into the heavens. Then she said to me:

"Is it true, shepherd, that you people are magicians?"

"Not in the least, our demoiselle. But here we live much nearer the stars than the people of the plain, and know better what is taking place among the sparkling lights of heaven!"

She was still gazing upward, resting her head against one of her hands, and wrapped in the sheepskin like a little heavenly shepherd.

"Ah, how beautiful they are!" cried she. "I never saw so many of them before! Do you know their names, shepherd?"

"Yes, indeed, mistress! Listen: Right above us is St. Jacques' highway. It goes from France straight into Spain. It was St. Jacques de Galice who traced it to show his road to the brave Charlemagne when he was making war upon the Saracens. Further away you have the Car of Souls, with its four resplendent axle-trees. The three stars in front are the three horses, and that tiny one almost against the third is the car-driver. Do you see all around that shower of falling stars? They are the souls the good God does not want in heaven.

"A little lower is the Hayrack or the Three Kings. The stars forming it serve as our clock. I have only to glance at them to know that it is now after midnight. A little lower yet, still looking toward the south, shines Jean de Milan, the torch of the stars. Regarding that star this is what the shepherds relate: It appears that one night Jean de Milan, with the Three Kings and the Ponciniere, was invited to the wedding of a star, one of their friends. The Ponciniere, more in a hurry than the rest, started, they say, the first of all and took the high road. Look at her up there away in the midst of the heavens.

"The Three Kings went by a lower road and overtook her, but lazy Jean de Milan, who had slept too late, was left behind, and, in order to stop them, in his fury he threw his stick at them. That is why the Three Kings are also called Jean de Milan's Stick. But the most beautiful of all the stars, mistress, is ours, the Shepherd's Star, that lights us at dawn when we drive

forth our flocks, and also in the evening when we bring them back. We have given it another name, Maguelonne—the beautiful Maguelonne who runs after Pierre de Provence and marries him every seven years."

"What, shepherd! Are there, then, marriages among the stars?"

"Yes, indeed, mistress!"

And as I was striving to explain to her what these marriages were, I felt something cool and soft weigh lightly upon my shoulder. It was her head, heavy with sleep, that was leaning against me, with a pretty rustling of ribbons, lace, and wavy hair. She remained thus without stirring until the moment when the stars of heaven paled, effaced by the dawning day.

As for me, I beheld her sleeping, somewhat troubled, but fully protected by the bright night that has never given me other than pure thoughts. Around us the stars continued their silent march as docile as a vast flock, and at times I imagined that one of those stars —the prettiest and most brilliant of them all—having lost its way, had come to me and placed its head upon my shoulder that it might slumber in peace.

"Is Kipling more than a fad?" was the subject of one night's discussion at the Story Club. The judgment was that he is one thing more, certainly. He is a relief, and a mighty welcome one after the scores of men who have used up reams of paper writing of "dyspeptic amours with dyspeptic women." He is no more a fad than football is. Both alike take you out of doors and out of yourself. He gets *through*, too, like a rusher bucking the centre. And this is a Kipling story.

BEYOND THE PALE.

A MAN should, whatever happens, keep to his own caste, race, and breed. Let the white go to the white and the black to the black. Then, whatever trouble falls, is in the ordinary course of things—neither sudden, alien, nor unexpected.

This is the story of a man who wilfully stepped beyond the safe limits of decent every-day society, and paid for it heavily.

He knew too much in the first instance, and he saw too much in the second. He took too deep an interest in native life, but he will never do so again.

Deep away in the heart of the city lies Amir Nath's gully, which ends in a dead wall pierced by one grated window. The walls of either side of the gully are without windows. Neither Suchet Singh nor Gaur Chand approve of their women folk looking into the world. If Durga Charan had been of their opinion he would have been a happier man to-day, and little Bisesa would have been able to knead her own bread. Her room looked out through the grated window into the narrow, dark gully, where the sun never came and where the buffaloes wallowed in the blue slime. She was a widow, about fifteen years old, and she prayed the gods day and night to send her a lover, for she did not approve of living alone.

One day the man—Trejago his name was—came into Amir Nath's gully on an aimless wandering, and after he had passed the buffaloes, he stumbled over a big heap of cattle food.

Then he saw that the gully ended in a trap, and heard a little laugh from behind the grated window. It was a pretty little laugh, and Trejago, knowing that, for all practical purposes, the old Arabian Nights are

good guides, went forward to the window and whispered that verse of "The Love Song of Har Dyal" which begins:

Can a man stand upright in the face of the naked sun; or a lover in the presence of his beloved?

If my feet fail me, O heart of my heart, am I to blame, being blinded by the glimpse of your beauty?

There came the faint clinks of a woman's bracelets from behind the grating, and a little voice went on with the song at the fifth verse:

Alas! alas! can the moon tell the Lotus of her love when the gate of heaven is shut and the clouds gather for the rains?

They have taken my beloved, and driven her with the pack horses to the north.

There are iron chains on the feet that were set on my heart.

Call to the bowmen to make ready——

The voice stopped suddenly, and Trejago walked out of Amir Nath's gully wondering who in the world could have capped "The Love Song of Har Dyal" so neatly.

Next morning as he was driving to office an old woman threw a packet into his dog-cart. In the packet was the half of a broken glass bangle, one flower of the blood-red dhak, a pinch of bhusa, or cattle food, and eleven cardamoms. That packet was a letter—not a clumsy, compromising letter, but an innocent, unintelligible, lover's epistle.

Trejago knew far too much about these things, as I have said. No Englishman should be able to translate object letters. But Trejago spread all the trifles on the lid of his office box and began to puzzle them out.

A broken glass bangle stands for a Hindoo widow all India over; because when her husband dies a woman's bracelets are broken on her wrists. Trejago saw the meaning of the little bit of the glass. The flower of the dhak means diversely "desire," "come," "write," or "danger," according to the other things with it. One cardamom means "jealousy;" but when any article is duplicated in an object letter it loses its symbolic meaning and stands merely for one of a number indicating time, or, if incense, curds, or if saffron be sent also, place. The message ran, then: "A widow—dhak flower and bhusa—at eleven o'clock." The pinch of bhusa enlightened Trejago. He saw—this kind of letter leaves much to instinctive knowledge—that the bhusa referred to the big heap of cattle food over which

he had fallen in Amir Nath's gully, and that the message must come from the person behind the grating, she being a widow. So the message ran, then: "A widow in the gully in which is the heap of bhusa desires you to come at eleven o'clock."

Trejago threw all the rubbish into the fireplace and laughed. He knew that the men in the East do not make love under windows at eleven in the forenoon, nor do women fix appointments a week in advance. So he went that very night at eleven into Amir Nath's gully clad in a boorka, which cloaks a man as well as a woman. Directly the gongs in the city made the hour, the little voice behind the grating took up "The Love Song of Har Dyal" at the verse where the Panthan girl calls upon Har Dyal to return. The song is really pretty in the vernacular. In English you miss the wail of it. It runs something like this:

Alone upon the housetops to the north
I turn and watch the lightning in the sky;
The glamor of thy footsteps in the north,
Come back to me, belovèd, or I die!

Below my feet the still bazar is laid,
Far, far below the weary camels lie,
The camels and the captives of thy raid;
Come back to me, belovèd, or I die!

My father's wife is old and harsh with years,
And drudge of all my father's house am I;
My bread is sorrow and my drink is tears;
Come back to me, belovèd, or I die!

As the song stopped Trejago stepped up under the grating and whispered: "I am here."

Bisesa was good to look upon.

That night was the beginning of many strange things, and of a double life so wild that Trejago to-day sometimes wonders if it were not all a dream. Bisesa or her old handmaiden, who had thrown the object letter, had detached the heavy grating from the brick-work of the wall; so that the window slid inside, leaving only a square of raw masonry into which an active man might climb.

In the day-time Trejago drove through his routine of office work, or put on his calling clothes and called on the ladies of the station; wondering how long they would know him if they knew of poor little Bisesa. At night, when all the city was still, came the walk under

the evil-smelling boorka, the quick turn into Amir Nath's gully between the sleeping cattle and the dead walls, and then, last of all, Bisesa, and the deep, even breathing of the old woman who slept outside the door of the bare little room that Durga Charan allotted to his sister's daughter. Who or what Durga Charan was Trejago never inquired; and why in the world he was not discovered and knifed never occurred to him till his madness was over, and Bisesa. But this comes later.

Bisesa was an endless delight to Trejago. She was as ignorant as a bird, and her distorted versions of the rumors from the outside world that had reached her in her room amused Trejago almost as much as her lisping attempts to pronounce his name, "Christopher." The first syllable was always more than she could manage, and she made funny little gestures with her rose-leaf hands, as one throwing the name away, and then kneeling before Trejago, asked him, exactly as an English woman would do, if he were sure he loved her. Trejago swore that he loved her more than any one else in the world. Which was true.

After a month of this folly the exigencies of his other life compelled Trejago to be especially attentive to a lady of his acquaintance. You may take it for a fact that anything of this kind is not only noticed and discussed by a man's own race, but by some hundred and fifty natives as well. Trejago had to walk with this lady and talk to her at the band stand, and once or twice to drive with her, never for an instant dreaming that this would affect his dearer out-of-the-way life. But the news flew in the usual mysterious fashion from mouth to mouth, till Bisesa's duenna heard of it and told Bisesa. The child was so troubled that she did the household work evilly, and was beaten by Durga Charan's wife in consequence.

A week later Bisesa taxed Trejago with the flirtation. She understood no gradations and spoke openly. Trejago laughed and Bisesa stamped her little feet—little feet, light as marigold flowers, that could lie in the palm of a man's one hand.

Much that is written about "Oriental passion and impulsiveness" is exaggerated and compiled at second hand, but a little of it is true; and when an Englishman finds that little it is quite as startling as any passion

in his own proper life. Bisesa raged and stormed, and finally threatened to kill herself if Trejago did not at once drop the alien who had come between them. Trejago tried to explain, and to show her that she did not understand these things from a Western standpoint. Bisesa drew herself up and said simply:

"I do not. I know only this—it is not good that I should have made you dearer than my own heart to me. You are an Englishman. I am only a black girl"—she was fairer than bar gold in the mint—"and the widow of a black man."

Then she sobbed and said: "But on my soul and my mother's soul, I love you. There shall no harm come to you, whatever happens to me."

Trejago argued with the child and tried to soothe her, but she seemed quite unreasonably disturbed. Nothing would satisfy her save that all relations between them should end. He was to go away at once. And he went. As he dropped out at the window she kissed his forehead twice, and he walked home wondering.

A week and then three weeks passed without a sign from Bisesa. Trejago, thinking that the rupture had lasted quite long enough, went down to Amir Nath's gully for the fifth time in the three weeks, hoping that his rap at the sill of the shifting grating would be answered. He was not disappointed.

There was a young moon, and one stream of light fell down into Amir Nath's gully and struck the grating, which was drawn away as he knocked. From the black dark Bisesa held out her arms into the moonlight. Both hands had been cut off at the wrists, and the stumps were nearly healed.

Then, as Bisesa bowed her head between her arms and sobbed, some one in the room grunted like a wild beast, and something sharp—knife, sword, or spear—thrust at Trejago in his boorka. The stroke missed his body, but cut into one of the muscles of the groin, and he limped slightly from the wound for the rest of his days.

The grating went into its place. There was no sign whatever from inside the house—nothing but the moonlight strip on the high wall and the blackness of Amir Nath's gully behind.

The next thing Trejago remembers, after raging and

shouting like a madman between those pitiless walls, is that he found himself near the river as the dawn was breaking, threw away his boorka, and went home bare-headed.

* * * * * *

What the tragedy was—whether Bisesa had in a fit of causeless despair told everything, or the intrigue had been discovered and she tortured to tell; whether Durga Charan knew his name and what became of Bisesa—Trejago does not know to this day. Something horrible had happened, and the thought of what it must have been comes upon Trejago in the night now and again, and keeps him company till the morning. One special feature of the case is that he does not know where lies the front of Durga Charan's house. Trejago cannot tell. He cannot get Bisesa—poor little Bisesa—back again. He has lost her in the city where each man's house is as guarded and as unknowable as the grave; and the grating that opens into Amir Nath's gully has been walled up.

But Trejago pays his calls regularly and is reckoned a very decent sort of man.

There is nothing peculiar about him except a slight stiffness, caused by a riding strain, in the right leg.

How short may a good story be? When a master-hand tells it, it need be no longer than this one, which first found type in the Detroit *Free Press*.

THE CRY IN THE DARK.

NOT an Indian had been seen all the afternoon—no signs had been met with.

The ride had led over ground so sterile that even sage-brush could not grow there—across dry ravines—over outcrop of flinty rock—from one ridge to another, until at last we came to the Loup River and went into camp in a scattered grove. No sign of an Indian there. As the setting sun flooded the earth with its golden light we could see for miles and miles in every direction. No sign of danger.

Night comes down as softly as a child closes its eyes in sleep and the light breeze from the north brings a film of white cloud to hide a portion of the stars. A sentinel is posted on the bank of the stream, a second to the east, a third to the west. It seems almost absurd to take these precautions. The crickets sing under the stones, field-mice run about in the grass, the waters of the Loup sing a peaceful song as they flow past our camp.

No Indians—no signs. It is such calm, quiet nights as this which have lulled the tired emigrant to his last sleep on earth. Seeing no Indians, he has argued that none were lurking and watching. We who have fought the red man from Fort Kearney to the source of the Powder River know him better. The very absence of his footprints is a menace. The quietness of the night is a warning to be heeded.

At ten o'clock everybody but the sentinels is fast asleep. Some of the horses are lying at full length, so buried in slumber that their heavy breathing can be heard for yards away. At eleven o'clock all is quiet. Even the crickets have almost given o'er their noise. Fleecy clouds now cover the whole heavens, making the night no darker, but more uncertain. As the eye looks off over the level plain the shadows take on a different shape and have more life.

Midnight! The three sentinels softly enter camp,

bend over the sleepers, and five minutes later the guard has been changed. Those who slept are now as watchful as foxes; those who watched are in the land of dreams.

Half-past twelve o'clock! No sound now but the purling waters, and their monotony would close the eyes of a sentinel who listened long.

One o'clock! Now there is the quietness of a graveyard. Men and horses seem to be dead. The sentinel to the east gives a sudden start. He would deny it on his oath, but for an instant he slept. He shakes himself and looks over the camp. All is peace, but he has received a shock which makes his heart beat faster. His stand is at the foot of a cottonwood. He sinks down on his knees and peers out from either side of the trunk. Nothing in sight—nothing but the dark shadows cast by the clouds.

"Chirp! Chirp! Chirp!"

A cricket begins his song again after a long silence. It seems loud enough to awaken every sleeper, but it is not. It is very low and quiet. It reaches the ear of only one sentinel.

"Watch! Watch! Watch!"

His heart leaps to his mouth. The words come to him as plain as if spoken by some human being. Watch what? Watch where? Watch for whom?

"Watch! Watch! Watch!"

The sentinel's eyes fell upon a dark spot on the ground a hundred feet away. It is the shadow of a cloud. The danger spot in the centre is a rock lifting its head out of the earth. He noticed it before the darkness came. He can see nothing moving—there is no danger.

"Look! Look! Look!"

His heart jumps again and his eyes go back to the dark spot. They cling there for two or three minutes, during which time the cricket is absolutely silent. Did something move? Is the black spot nearer than it was?

"Creeping! Crawling! Coming!"

So shouts the cricket, and now the sentinel is sure that the dark spot has advanced. Of course it has! It has also changed the line of its advance. With bated breath he waits and watches. The man who disturbs camp without good cause will be taunted with cowardice. Ah! it does move! The black spot is not now over fifty feet away.

"Shoot! Shoot! Shoot!"

The sentinel softly pulls back the hammer of his heavy carbine, raises the weapon quietly to his shoulder, and the loud report is followed by a cry so long-drawn, so wild and weird and full of death that no one forgets it for a month. There is wild confusion in a moment, and then everybody is ready.

"What is it?"

Three or four men advance to the dark spot, to find the body of an Indian stretched at full length on the earth, shot through the breast. Eighty rods away are half a hundred fierce warriors, waiting in the darkness for the spy to return and report. At the sound of his death-cry they mount their ponies and ride away.

"What is the charm of Robert Louis Stevenson?" After a discussion of all his stories for four meetings, the Club decided that one important element of his charm is that he tells a story, contenting himself with the telling without trying to explain everything in heaven and on earth. An atmosphere of mystery lives afterward and haunts you in a pleasing way; as in this story.

MARKHEIM.

"YES," said the dealer, "our windfalls are of various kinds. Some customers are ignorant, and then I touch a dividend on my superior knowledge. Some are dishonest," and here he held up the candle, so that the light fell strongly on his visitor, "and in that case," he continued, "I profit by my virtue."

Markheim had but just entered from the daylight streets, and his eyes had not yet grown familiar with the mingled shine and darkness in the shop. At these pointed words, and before the near presence of the flame, he blinked painfully and looked aside.

The dealer chuckled. "You come to me on Christmas day," he resumed, "when you know that I am alone in my house, have put up my shutters, and make a point of refusing business. Well, you will have to pay for that; you will have to pay for my loss of time, when I should be balancing my books; you will have to pay, besides, for a kind of manner that I remark in you today very strongly. I am the essence of discretion, and ask no awkward questions; but when a customer cannot look me in the eye, he has to pay for it." The dealer once more chuckled; and then, changing to his usual business voice, though still with a note of irony, "You can give, as usual, a clear account of how you came into possession of the object?" he continued. "Still your uncle's cabinet? A remarkable collector, sir!"

And the little, pale, round-shouldered dealer stood almost on tip-toe, looking over the top of his gold spectacles, and nodding his head with every mark of disbelief. Markheim returned his gaze with one of infinite pity and a touch of horror.

"This time," said he, "you are in error. I have not come to sell, but to buy. I have no curios to dispose

of; my uncle's cabinet is bare to the wainscot; even were it still intact, I have done well on the Stock Exchange, and should more likely add to it than otherwise, and my errand to-day is simplicity itself. I seek a Christmas present for a lady," he continued, waxing more fluent as he struck into the speech he had prepared; "and certainly I owe you every excuse for thus disturbing you upon so small a matter. But the thing was neglected yesterday; I must produce my little compliment at dinner; and, as you very well know, a rich marriage is not a thing to be neglected."

There followed a pause, during which the dealer seemed to weigh this statement incredulously. The ticking of many clocks among the curious lumber of the shop, and the faint rushing of the cabs in a near thoroughfare, filled up the interval of silence.

"Well, sir," said the dealer, "be it so. You are an old customer, after all; and if, as you say, you have the chance of a good marriage, far be it from me to be an obstacle. Here is a nice thing for a lady, now," he went on, "this hand-glass—fifteenth century, warranted; comes from a good collection, too; but I reserve the name, in the interests of my customer, who was just like yourself, my dear sir, the nephew and sole heir of a remarkable collector."

The dealer, while he thus ran on in his dry and biting voice, had stooped to take the object from its place; and, as he had done so, a shock had passed through Markheim, a start both of hand and foot, a sudden leap of many tumultuous passions to the face. It passed as swiftly as it came, and left no trace beyond a certain trembling of the hand that now received the glass.

"A glass?" he said hoarsely, and then paused and repeated it more clearly. "A glass? For Christmas? Surely not!"

"And why not?" cried the dealer. "Why not a glass?"

Markheim was looking upon him with an indefinable expression. "You ask me why not?" he said. "Why, look here—look in it—look at yourself! Do you like to see it? No! nor I—nor any man."

The little man had jumped back when Markheim had so suddenly confronted him with the mirror; but now, perceiving there was nothing worse on hand, he

chuckled. "Your future lady, sir, must be pretty hard favored," said he.

"I ask," said Markheim, "for a Christmas present, and you give me this—this damned reminder of years and sins and follies—this hand conscience! Did you mean it? Had you a thought in your mind? Tell me. It will be better for you if you do. Come, tell me about yourself. I hazard a guess, now, that you are in secret a very charitable man?"

The dealer looked closely at his companion. It was very odd. Markheim did not appear to be laughing; there was something in his face like an eager spark of hope, but nothing of mirth.

"What are you driving at?" the dealer asked.

"Not charitable?" returned the other gloomily. "Not charitable; not pious; not scrupulous; unloving; unbeloved; a hand to get money, a safe to keep it. Is that all? Dear God, is that all?"

"I will tell you what it is," began the dealer with some sharpness, and then broke off again into a chuckle. "But I see this is a love-match of yours, and you have been drinking the lady's health."

"Ah!" cried Markheim, with a strange curiosity. "Ah, have you been in love? Tell me about that."

"I!" cried the dealer. "I in love! I never had the time, nor have I the time to-day for all this nonsense. Will you take the glass?"

"Where is the hurry?" returned Markheim. "It is very pleasant to stand here talking; and life is so short and insecure that I would not hurry away from any pleasure—no, not even from so mild a one as this. We should rather cling, cling to what little we can get, like a man at a cliff's edge. Every second is a cliff if you think upon it—a cliff a mile high—high enough, if we fall, to dash us out of every feature of humanity. Hence it is best to talk pleasantly. Let us talk of each other; why should we wear this mask? Let us be confidential. Who knows, we might become friends?"

"I have just one word to say to you," said the dealer. "Either make your purchase or walk out of my shop."

"True, true," said Markheim. "Enough fooling. To business. Show me something else."

The dealer stooped once more, this time to replace the glass upon the shelf, his thin blonde hair falling over his eyes as he did so. Markheim moved a little

nearer, with one hand in the pocket of his great-coat; he drew himself up and filled his lungs; at the same time many different emotions were depicted together on his face—terror, horror, and resolve, fascination and a physical repulsion; and through a haggard lift of his upper lip his teeth looked out.

"This, perhaps, may suit," observed the dealer; and then, as he began to re-arise, Markheim bounded from behind upon his victim. The long, skewer-like dagger flashed and fell. The dealer struggled like a hen, striking his temple on the shelf, and then tumbled on the floor in a heap.

Time had some score of small voices in that shop, some stately and slow as was becoming to their great age; others garrulous and hurried. All these told out the seconds in an intricate chorus of tickings. Then the passage of a lad's feet, heavily running on the pavement, broke in upon these smaller voices and startled Markheim into the consciousness of his surroundings. He looked about him awfully. The candle stood on the counter, its flame solemnly wagging in a draught; and by that inconsiderable movement, the whole room was filled with noiseless bustle and kept heaving like a sea: the tall shadows nodding, the gross blots of darkness swelling and dwindling as with respiration, the faces of the portraits and the china gods changing and wavering like images in water. The inner door stood ajar, and peered into that leaguer of shadows with a long slit of daylight like a pointing finger.

From these fear-stricken rovings, Markheim's eyes returned to the body of his victim, where it lay both humped and sprawling, incredibly small and strangely meaner than in life. In these poor, miserly clothes, in that ungainly attitude, the dealer lay like so much sawdust. Markheim had feared to see it, and, lo! it was nothing. And yet, as he gazed, this bundle of old clothes and pool of blood began to find eloquent voices. There it must lie; there was none to work the cunning hinges or direct the miracle of locomotion—there it must lie till it was found. Found! ay, and then? Then would this dead flesh lift up a cry that would ring over England and fill the world with the echoes of pursuit. Ay, dead or not, this was still the enemy. "Time was that when the brains were out," he thought;

and the first word struck into his mind. Time, now that the deed was accomplished—time, which had closed for the victim, had become instant and momentous for the slayer.

The thought was yet in his mind, when, first one and then another, with every variety of pace and voice—one deep as the bell from a cathedral turret, another ringing on its treble notes the prelude of a waltz—the clocks began to strike the hour of three in the afternoon.

The sudden outbreak of so many tongues in that dumb chamber staggered him. He began to bestir himself, going to and fro with the candle, beleaguered by moving shadows and startled to the soul by chance reflections. In many rich mirrors, some of home designs, some from Venice or Amsterdam, he saw his face repeated and repeated, as it were an army of spies; his own eyes met and detected him; and the sound of his own steps, lightly as they fell, vexed the surrounding quiet. And still as he continued to fill his pockets, his mind accused him, with a sickening iteration, of the thousand faults of his design. He should have chosen a more quiet hour; he should have prepared an alibi; he should not have used a knife; he should have been more cautious, and only bound and gagged the dealer, and not killed him; he should have been more bold and killed the servant also; he should have done all things otherwise; poignant regrets, weary, incessant toiling of the mind to change what was unchangeable, to plan what was now useless, to be the architect of the irrevocable past. Meanwhile, and behind all this activity, brute terrors, like the scurrying of rats in a deserted attic, filled the more remote chambers of his brain with riot; the hand of the constable would fall heavy on his shoulder, and his nerves would jerk like a hooked fish; or he beheld, in galloping defile, the dock, the prison, the gallows, and the black coffin.

Terror of the people in the street sat down before his mind like a besieging army. It was impossible, he thought, but that some rumor of the struggle must have reached their ears and set on edge their curiosity; and now, in all the neighboring houses, he divined them sitting motionless and with uplifted ear—solitary people, condemned to spend Christmas dwelling alone on memories of the past, and now startlingly recalled from

that tender exercise; happy family parties struck into silence round the table, the mother still, with raised finger: every degree and age and humor, but all, by their own hearths, prying and hearkening and weaving the rope that was to hang him. Sometimes it seemed to him he could not move too softly; the clink of the tall Bohemian goblets rang out loudly like a bell; and alarmed by the bigness of the ticking, he was tempted to stop the clocks. And then, again, with a swift transition of his terrors, the very silence of the place appeared a source of peril and a thing to strike and freeze the passer-by; and he would step more boldly and bustle aloud among the contents of the shop, and imitate, with elaborate bravado, the movements of a busy man at ease in his own house.

But he was now so pulled about by different alarms that while one portion of his mind was still alert and cunning, another trembled on the brink of lunacy. One hallucination in particular took a strong hold on his credulity. The neighbor hearkening with white face beside his window, the passer-by arrested by a horrible surmise on the pavement—these could at worst suspect, they could not know; through the brick walls and shuttered windows only sounds could penetrate. But here, within the house, was he alone? He knew he was; he had watched the servant set forth sweethearting, in her poor best, "out for the day" written in every ribbon and smile. Yes, he was alone, of course; and yet, in the bulk of empty house above him, he could surely hear a stir of delicate footing—he was surely conscious, inexplicably conscious, of some presence. Ay, surely; to every room and corner of the house his imagination followed it; and now it was a faceless thing, and yet had eyes to see with; and again it was a shadow of himself; and yet again behold the image of the dead dealer, reinspired with cunning and hatred.

At times, with a strong effort, he would glance at the open door which still seemed to repel his eyes. The house was tall, the skylight small and dirty, the day blind with fog; and the light that filtered down to the ground story was exceedingly faint, and showed dimly on the threshold of the shop. And yet, in that strip of doubtful brightness, did there not hang wavering a shadow?

Suddenly, from the street outside, a very jovial gen-

tleman began to beat with a staff on the shop-door, accompanying his blows with shouts and railleries in which the dealer was continually called upon by name. Markheim, smitten into ice, glanced at the dead man. But no! he lay quite still; he was fled away far beyond earshot of these blows and shoutings; he was sunk beneath seas of silence; and his name, which would once have caught his notice above the howling of a storm, had become an empty sound. And presently the jovial gentleman desisted from his knocking and departed.

Here was a broad hint to hurry what remained to be done, to get forth from this accusing neighborhood, to plunge into a bath of London multitudes, and to reach, on the other side of day, that haven of safety and apparent innocence—his bed. One visitor had come: at any moment another might follow and be more obstinate. To have done the deed, and yet not to reap the profit, would be too abhorrent a failure. The money—that was now Markheim's concern; and as a means to that, the keys.

He glanced over his shoulder at the open door, where the shadow was still lingering and shivering; and with no conscious repugnance of the mind, yet with a tremor of the belly, he drew near the body of his victim. The human character had quite departed. Like a suit half-stuffed with bran, the limbs lay scattered, the trunk doubled, on the floor; and yet the thing repelled him. Although so dingy and inconsiderable to the eye, he feared it might have more significance to the touch. He took the body by the shoulders and turned it on its back. It was strangely light and supple, and the limbs, as if they had been broken, fell into the oddest postures. The face was robbed of all expression; but it was as pale as wax and shockingly smeared with blood about one temple. That was, for Markheim, the one displeasing circumstance. It carried him back, upon the instant, to a certain fair day in a fishers' village, a gray day, a piping wind, a crowd upon the street, the blare of brasses, the booming of drums, the nasal voice of a ballad singer; and a boy going to and fro, buried over head in the crowd and divided between interest and fear, until, coming out upon the chief place of concourse, he beheld a booth and a great screen with pictures, dismally designed, garishly colored: Brownrigg with her apprentice; the

Mannings with their murdered guest; We are in the death-grip of Thurtell; and a score besides of famous crimes. The thing was as clear as an illusion; he was once again that little boy; he was looking once again, and with the same sense of physical revolt, at these vile pictures; he was still stunned by the thumping of the drums. A bar of that day's music returned upon his memory; and at that, for the first time, a qualm came over him, a breath of nausea, a sudden weakness of the joints, which he must instantly resist and conquer.

He judged it more prudent to confront than to flee from these considerations; looking the more hardily in the dead face, bending his mind to realize the nature and greatness of his crime. So little a while ago that face had moved with every change of sentiment, that pale mouth had spoken, that body had been all on fire with governable energies; and now, and by his act, that piece of life had been arrested, as the horologist, with interjected finger, arrests the beating of the clock. So he reasoned in vain; he could rise to no more remorseful consciousness; the same heart which had shuddered before the painted effigies of crime, looked on its reality unmoved. At best, he felt a gleam of pity for one who had been endowed in vain with all those faculties that can make the world a garden of enchantment, one who had never lived and who was now dead. But of penitence—no, with a tremor.

With that, shaking himself clear of these considerations, he found the keys and advanced toward the open door of the shop. Outside, it had begun to rain smartly; and the sound of the shower upon the roof had banished silence. Like some dripping cavern, the chambers of the house were haunted by an incessant echoing, which filled the ear and mingled with the ticking of the clocks. And as Markheim approached the door, he seemed to hear, in answer to his own cautious tread, the steps of another foot withdrawing up the stair. The shadow still palpitated loosely on the threshold. He threw a ton's weight of resolve upon his muscles and drew back the door.

The faint, foggy daylight glimmered dimly on the bare floor and stairs; on the bright suit of armor posted, halbert in hand, upon the landing; and on the dark wood-carvings, and framed pictures that hung against the yellow panels of the wainscot. So loud

was the beating of the rain through all the house that, in Markheim's ears, it began to be distinguished into many different sounds. Footsteps and sighs, the tread of regiments marching in the distance, the chink of money in the counting, and the creaking of doors held stealthily ajar, appeared to mingle with the patter of the drops upon the cupola and the gushing of the water in the pipes. The sense that he was not alone grew upon him to the verge of madness. On every side he was haunted and begirt by presences. He heard them moving in the upper chambers; from the shop, he heard the dead man getting to his legs; and as he began with a great effort to mount the stairs, feet fled quietly before him and followed stealthily behind. If he were but deaf, he thought, how tranquilly he would possess his soul! And then again, and hearkening with ever fresh attention, he blessed himself for that unresisting sense which held the outposts and stood a trusty sentinel upon his life. His head turned continually on his neck; his eyes, which seemed starting from their orbits, scouted on every side, and on every side were half-rewarded as with the tail of something nameless vanishing. The four-and-twenty steps to the first floor were four-and-twenty agonies.

On that first story the doors stood ajar, three of them like three ambushes, shaking his nerves like the throats of cannon. He could never again, he felt, be sufficiently immured and fortified from men's observing eyes; he longed to be home, girt in by walls, buried among bedclothes, and invisible to all but God. And at that thought he wondered a little, recollecting tales of other murderers and the fear they were said to entertain of heavenly avengers. It was not so, at least, with him. He feared the laws of nature, lest, in their callous and immutable procedure, they should preserve some damning evidence of his crime. He feared tenfold more, with a slavish, superstitious terror, some scission in the continuity of man's experience, some wilful illegality of nature. He played a game of skill, depending on the rules, calculating consequence from cause; and what if nature, as the defeated tyrant overthrew the chess-board, should break the mould of their succession? The like had befallen Napoleon (so writers said) when the winter changed the time of its appearance. The like might befall Markheim: the solid

walls might become transparent and reveal his doings like those of bees in a glass hive; the stout planks might yield under his foot like quicksands and detain him in their clutch; ay, and there were soberer accidents that might destroy him: if, for instance, the house should fall and imprison him beside the body of his victim: or the house next door should fly on fire, and the firemen invade him from all sides. These things he feared; and, in a sense, these things might be called the hands of God reached forth against sin. But about God himself he was at ease; his act was doubtless exceptional, but so were his excuses, which God knew; it was there, and not among men, that he felt sure of justice.

When he had got safe into the drawing-room and shut the door behind him, he was aware of a respite from alarms. The room was quite dismantled, uncarpeted besides, and strewn with packing-cases and incongruous furniture; several great pier-glasses, in which he beheld himself at various angles, like an actor on a stage; many pictures, framed and unframed, standing with their faces to the wall; a fine Sheraton sideboard, a cabinet of marquetry, and a great old bed with tapestry hangings. The windows opened to the floor; but by great good fortune the lower part of the shutters had been closed, and this concealed him from the neighbors. Here, then, Markheim drew in a packing-case before the cabinet, and began to search among the keys. It was a long business, for there were many; and it was irksome, besides; for, after all, there might be nothing in the cabinet, and time was on the wing. But the closeness of the occupation sobered him. With the tail of his eye he saw the door—even glanced at it from time to time directly, like a besieged commander pleased to verify the good estate of his defences. But in truth he was at peace. The rain falling in the street sounded natural and pleasant. Presently, on the other side, the notes of a piano were awakened to the music of a hymn, and the voices of many children took up the air and words. How stately, how comfortable was the melody! How fresh the youthful voices! Markheim gave ear to it smilingly as he sorted out the keys, and his mind was thronged with answerable ideas and images; church-going children and the pealing of the high organ; children afield, bathers by the brook-side,

ramblers on the brambly common, kite-flyers in the windy and cloud-navigated sky; and then, at another cadence of the hymn, back again to church, and the somnolence of summer Sundays, and the high genteel voice of the parson (which he smiled a little to recall), and the painted Jacobean tombs, and the dim lettering of the Ten Commandments in the chancel.

And as he sat thus, at once busy and absent, he was startled to his feet. A flash of ice, a flash of fire, a bursting gush of blood, went over him, and then he stood transfixed and thrilling. A step mounted the stair slowly and steadily, and presently a hand was laid upon the knob, and the lock clicked, and the door opened.

Fear held Markheim in a vise. What to expect he knew not, whether the dead man walking, or the official ministers of human justice, or some chance witness blindly stumbling in to consign him to the gallows. But when a face was thrust into the aperture, glanced round the room, looked at him, nodded and smiled as if in friendly recognition and then withdrew again, and the door closed behind it, his fear broke loose from his control in a hoarse cry. At the sound of this the visitant returned.

"Did you call me?" he asked pleasantly, and with that he entered the room and closed the door behind him.

Markheim stood and gazed at him with all his eyes. Perhaps there was a film upon his sight, but the outlines of the new-comer seemed to change and waver like those of the idols in the wavering candle-light of the shop; and at times he thought he knew him; and at times he thought he bore a likeness to himself; and always, like a lump of living terror, there lay in his bosom the conviction that this thing was not of the earth and not of God.

And yet the creature had a strange air of the commonplace as he stood looking on Markheim with a smile: and when he added: "You are looking for money, I believe?" it was in the tones of every-day politeness.

Markheim made no answer.

"I should warn you," resumed the other, "that the maid has left her sweetheart earlier than usual and will soon be here. If Mr. Markheim be found in this house, I need not describe to him the consequences."

"You know me?" cried the murderer.

The visitor smiled. "You have long been a favorite of mine," he said; "and I have long observed and often sought to help you."

"What are you?" cried Markheim: "the devil?"

"What I may be," returned the other, "cannot affect the service I propose to render you."

"It can!" cried Markheim; "it does! Be helped by you? No, never; not by you! You do not know me yet; thank God, you do not know me!"

"I know you," replied the visitant, with a sort of kind severity or rather firmness. "I know you to the soul."

"Know me!" cried Markheim. "Who can do so? My life is but a travesty and slander on myself. I have lived to belie my nature. All men do; all men are better than this disguise that grows about and stifles them. You see each dragged away by life, like one whom bravos have seized and muffled in a cloak. If they had their own control—if you could see their faces, they would be altogether different, they would shine out for heroes and saints! I am worse than most; myself is more overlaid; my excuse is known to me and God. But had I the time I could disclose myself.

"To me?" inquired the visitant.

"To you before all," returned the murderer. "I supposed you were intelligent. I thought—since you exist—you would prove a reader of the heart. And yet you would propose to judge me by my acts! Think of it—my acts! I was born and I have lived in a land of giants; giants have dragged me by the wrists since I was born out of my mother—the giants of circumstance. And you would judge me by my acts! But can you not look within? Can you not understand that evil is hateful to me? Can you not see within me the clear writing of conscience, never blurred by any wilful sophistry, although too often disregarded? Can you not read me for a thing that surely must be common as humanity—the unwilling sinner?"

"All this is very feelingly expressed," was the reply, "but it regards me not. These points of consistency are beyond my province, and I care not in the least by what compulsion you may have been dragged away, so as you are but carried in the right direction. But time flies; the servant delays, looking in the faces of

the crowd and at the pictures on the boardings, but still she keeps moving nearer; and remember, it is as if the gallows itself was striding toward you through the Christmas streets! Shall I help you—I, who know all? Shall I tell you where to find the money?"

"For what price?" asked Markheim.

"I offer you the service for a Christmas gift," returned the other.

Markheim could not refrain from smiling with a kind of bitter triumph. "No," said he, "I will take nothing at your hands; if I were dying of thirst and it was your hand that put the pitcher to my lips, I should find the courage to refuse. I may be credulous, but I will do nothing to commit myself to evil."

"I have no objection to a death-bed repentance," observed the visitant.

"Because you disbelieve their efficacy!" Markheim cried.

"I do not say so," returned the other; "but I look on these things from a different side, and when the life is done my interest falls. The man has lived to serve me, to spread black looks under color of religion, or to sow tares in the wheat-field, as you do, in a course of weak compliance with desire. Now that he draws so near to his deliverance, he can add but one act of service—to repent, to die smiling, and thus to build up in confidence and hope the more timorous of my surviving followers. I am not so hard a master. Try me. Accept my help. Please yourself in life as you have done hitherto; please yourself more amply, spread your elbows at the board; and when the night begins to fall and the curtains to be drawn, I tell you, for your greater comfort, that you will find it even easy to compound your quarrel with your conscience and to make a truckling peace with God. I came but now from such a death-bed, and the room was full of sincere mourners, listening to the man's last words: and when I looked into that face, which had been set as a flint against mercy, I found it smiling with hope."

"And do you, then, suppose me such a creature?" asked Markheim. "Do you think I have no more generous aspirations than to sin, and sin, and sin, and, at last, sneak into heaven? My heart rises at the thought. Is this, then, your experience of mankind? or is it because you find me with red hands that you

presume such baseness? And is this crime of murder indeed so impious as to dry up the very springs of good?"

"Murder is to me in no special category," replied the other. "All sins are murder, even as all life is war. I behold your race, like starving mariners on a raft, plucking crusts out of the hands of famine and feeding on each other's lives. I follow sins beyond the moment of their acting; I find in all that the last consequence is death; and to my eyes, the pretty maid who thwarts her mother with such taking graces on a question of a ball, drips no less visibly with human gore than such a murderer as yourself. Do I say that I follow sins? I follow virtues also; they differ not by the thickness of a nail—they are both scythes for the reaping angel of Death. Evil, for which I live, consists not in action, but in character. The bad man is dear to me; not the bad act, whose fruits, if we could follow them far enough down the hurtling cataract of the ages, might yet be found more blessed than those of the rarest virtues. And it is not because you have killed a dealer, but because you are Markheim, that I offered to forward your escape."

"I will lay my heart open to you," answered Markheim. "This crime on which you find me is my last. On my way to it I have learned many lessons; itself is a lesson, a momentous lesson. Hitherto I have been driven with revolt to what I would not; I was a bond-slave to poverty, driven and scourged. There are robust virtues that can stand in these temptations; mine was not so: I had a thirst of pleasure. But to-day, and out of this deed, I pluck both warning and riches—both the power and a fresh resolve to be myself. I become in all things a free actor in the world; I begin to see myself all changed, these hands the agents of good, this heart at peace. Something comes over me out of the past; something of what I have dreamed on Sabbath evenings to the sound of the church organ, of what I forecast when I shed tears over noble books, or talked, an innocent child, with my mother. There lies my life; I have wandered a few years, but now I see once more my city of destination."

"You are to use this money on the Stock Exchange, I think?" remarked the visitor; "and there, if I mistake not, you have already lost some thousands?"

"Ah," said Markheim, "but this time I have a sure thing."

"This time, again, you will lose," replied the visitor quietly.

"Ah, but I keep back the half!" cried Markheim.

"That also you will lose," said the other.

The sweat started upon Markheim's brow. "Well, then, what matter?" he exclaimed. "Say it be lost, say I am plunged again in poverty, shall one part of me, and that the worse, continue until the end to override the better? Evil and good run strong in me, haling me both ways. I do not love the one thing—I love all. I can conceive great deeds, renunciations, martyrdoms, and though I be fallen to such a crime as murder, pity is no stranger to my thoughts. I pity the poor; who knows their trials better than myself? I pity and help them; I prize love, I love honest laughter; there is no good thing nor true thing on earth but I love it from my heart. And are my vices only to direct my life, and my virtues to lie without effect, like some passive lumber of the mind? Not so; good, also, is a spring of acts."

But the visitant raised his finger. "For six-and-thirty years that you have been in this world," said he, "through many changes of fortune and varieties of humor, I have watched you steadily fall. Fifteen years ago you would have started at a theft. Three years back you would have blenched at the name of murder. Is there any crime, is there any cruelty or meanness, from which you still recoil?—five years from now I shall detect you in the fact! Downward, downward, lies your way; nor can anything but death avail to stop you."

"It is true," Markheim said huskily, "I have in some degree complied with evil. But it is so with all: the very saints, in the mere exercise of living, grow less dainty and take on the tone of their surroundings."

"I will propound to you one simple question," said the other; "and as you answer, I shall read to you your moral horoscope. You have grown in many things more lax; possibly you do right to be so; and at any account, it is the same with all men. But granting that, are you in any one particular, however trifling, more difficult to please with your own conduct, or do you go in all things with a looser rein?"

"In any one?" repeated Markheim, with an anguish of consideration. "No," he added, with despair, "no one! I have gone down in all."

"Then," said the visitor, "content yourself with what you are, for you will never change; and the words of your part on this stage are irrevocably written down."

Markheim stood for a long while silent, and indeed it was the visitor who first broke the silence. "That being so," he said, "shall I show you the money?"

"And grace?" cried Markheim.

"Have you not tried it?" returned the other. "Two or three years ago, did I not see you on the platform of revival meetings, and was not your voice the loudest in the hymn?"

"It is true," said Markheim; "and I see clearly what remains for me by way of duty. I thank you for these lessons from my soul; my eyes are opened, and I behold myself at last for what I am."

At this moment the sharp note of the door-bell rang through the house; and the visitant, as though this were some concerted signal for which he had been waiting, changed at once in his demeanor.

"The maid!" he cried. "She has returned, as I forewarned you, and there is now before you one more difficult passage. Her master, you must say, is ill; you must let her in, with an assured but rather serious countenance—no smiles, no overacting, and I promise you success! Once the girl within and the door closed, the same dexterity that has already rid you of the dealer will relieve you of this last danger in your path. Thenceforward you have the whole evening—the whole night, if needful—to ransack the treasures of the house and to make good your safety. This is help that comes to you with the mask of danger. Up!" he cried: "up, friend; your life hangs trembling in the scales; up, and act!"

Markheim steadily regarded his counsellor. "If I be condemned to evil acts," he said, "there is still one door of freedom open—I can cease from action. If my life be an ill thing, I can lay it down. Though I be, as you say truly, at the beck of every small temptation, I can yet, by one decisive gesture, place myself beyond the reach of all. My love of good is damned to barrenness; it may, and let it be! But I have still my hatred of evil; and from that, to your galling dis-

appointment, you shall see that I can draw both energy and courage."

The features of the visitor began to undergo a wonderful and lovely change: they brightened and softened with a tender triumph; and, even as they brightened, faded and dislimned. But Markheim did not pause to watch or understand the transformation. He opened the door and went down-stairs very slowly, thinking to himself. His past went soberly before him; he beheld it as it was, ugly and strenuous like a dream, random as chance-medley—a scene of defeat. Life, as he thus reviewed it, tempted him no longer; but on the further side he perceived a quiet haven for his bark. He paused in the passage and looked into the shop, where the candle still burned by the dead body. It was strangely silent. Thoughts of the dealer swarmed into his mind as he stood gazing. And then the bell once more broke out into impatient clamor.

He confronted the maid upon the threshold with something like a smile.

"You had better go for the police," said he; "I have killed your master."

It is a fact. You can find people to-day who saw this ghost.

A MISER'S GHOST.

About half-way between Tavares and Sanford, in Florida, several years ago, there lived an old bachelor orange-grower, a miser in his way. It was noised around that he kept a good deal of money about his house, and as that was located somewhat one side from the regular road, he was cautioned about it, as there were many gangs of disorderly negroes in that section engaged in railroad work who would not hesitate to cut a throat for very little money.

One day he was missing, and parties of his neighbors spent many weeks hunting in the woods for his body, which was finally found where the murderer had hidden it, under a pile of brushwood, near the house; but the head was missing. All the ponds in the neighborhood were searched and carefully seined, but it was some time before it was found, and then only because the rope that was holding it to a big iron stove parted and the head floated. It was a ghastly object when first seen floating around the pond with its open eyes and hideous wounds. The body was buried in one place, and as the head was not found till long afterward, it was interred in another grave.

For a year after, the neighbors living within a radius of several miles were annoyed and disturbed by the curious and dismal sounds that issued from the house which had been occupied by the victim. Several parties testified that they saw a headless corpse going around, bent over as if searching for something, and others not only saw the same thing, but also reported that they heard a horrible moaning noise, as if some one were in deep distress.

Later on came other reports still more ghastly—a ghostly head, it appears, was seen on the pond and then on the land, seemingly moving in the air. One frightened witness said that he heard the words: "Why did they part us—where is my body?" This continued till a party of five went out one night to verify the story, as they had no faith in such yarns. Proceeding

to the house, they waited. As the time of midnight approached they all grew nervous, and but for the disgrace and the jibes of their friends would have gone home.

All at once an unearthly groan broke on their ears and a headless form rose up before their eyes. It was larger than a man, but it bore all the familiar features of the dress of their old friend and neighbor. Slowly it went around the grounds, half bent over, as if searching for something, and then it wended its way to the lake.

As they gazed the lookers-on were horror-struck to see a bloody head with staring eyes arise from the water and float toward the headless form. The latter seemed to see it, and rushed toward it uttering a moaning noise. The head flew off, however, with a sound between a gurgle and a ghastly laugh, and the horrible race began.

The watchers grew wild and sick as they gazed on the unearthly spectacle. First the head would pause in its mid-air flight and allow the form to get near, and then, as its long arms were outstretched to grasp it, it would float away with an unwillingness that made the horrible spectacle still more blood-curdling. As it missed the object wanted, each time the headless form would utter a heart-rending moan, stop a moment with bowed shoulders, the blood streaming down its mutilated neck, and then, with a start, it would begin again its wild chase.

Sometimes the bloody head would pause till the form had almost touched it, and then, impelled by an irresistible force, which it seemed unable to combat, would fly off a few feet and then try and return, being prevented by some power that seemed to distress it much. Not a word was heard from it, but choked groans and half-uttered moans were audible all the time. The spectacle of these two bloody forms chasing each other was horrible in the extreme, and the watchers say that it was the most dreadful sight they ever beheld, and that for days and nights afterward they could not get the bloody visions off their minds. This chase was kept up for two hours or more, though to the panic-stricken watchers it was a deal longer.

Finally the form, after being tantalized by an unusually unsuccessful attempt, uttered a roar of rage and

ran off into the house and disappeared, the head flying in the air overhead and then returning to the pond, where it settled down on the water and disappeared with an unearthly sound. The watchers waited for nothing further, but fled for home at once. The next day three of them took courage, and going to the graveyard resurrected the head and body of the murdered man, and placing them in one coffin, again buried them. This, it seems, settled the ghost, for no other reports of the kind were ever heard.

It was only recently that it was known that the bodies had been thus united, as the parties interested kept their own counsel, but the neighborhood was glad to get rid of the ghost, and these parties, now known, have been thanked by their neighbors for their bravery and forethought. The murderer has never been discovered, though several men were arrested and tried. It made a good deal of talk at the time, which was intensified by the ghost-stories told.

A story of spiritualism and the part it played in the troubles brought by a bag of jewels, by Julian Hawthorne in the New York *Herald*.

RAXWORTHY'S TREASURE.

THIS story—as I now believe—began with an unconsidered interview between my mysterious friend, Six-Cent-Sam, and a meagre, elderly lady in a black dress. It took place in one of the compartments of the pawnshop annex. I was passing through on my way to the eating-house at the other end of the building and supposed that the elderly female was merely negotiating an ordinary loan. In the light of events that took place soon afterward I am now inclined to think otherwise.

In the eating-house I found Raxworthy lunching on bean soup and bread and I sat down with him. To those who know Raxworthy I need not say that he did not invite me to put my account on his check. But for the information of those who do not know him, it may be as well to give some account of who and what Raxworthy is.

He is the son of an English artist, himself the descendant of a family of English gentlemen. Raxworthy, senior, came to this country in his early manhood and made money out of real estate which he had inadvertently bought. He died rich and his son got all the property. There is a venerable town in England not far from London known as Isleworth, and in the pages of its history may be found the story of one Jasper Raxworthy, "The Miser of Isleworth." This personage was, I understand, the great-grandfather of the present bearer of the name. The latter is not only the great-grandson of the former, but he inherits his idiosyncrasy. He is a miser, and quite as picturesque and irrational as the miser of tradition. He thus affords unfailing entertainment to his friends.

He is about thirty years old, thin and pale, tall, and with no hair to speak of. His hands are long, bloodless, and knotty at the finger-joints. In disposition he is exceeding amiable, laughing readily in a thin, high cackle, while hundreds of fine wrinkles spring up round

his eyes and mouth. His conversation is as amiable and also as thin as his laugh, and is largely devoted to accounts of things he had done which he thought devilish clever, but which to our minds had more or less of the ludicrous.

For example, he was once engaged to marry a young woman, for no better reason, as I believe, than that he thought she was an economical housekeeper. She was poor, and he had bought her a gown to be married in —not a regular wedding-dress, but a useful costume that would be available for general purposes for years to come. At or about this juncture the lady wrote to break off the match. Raxworthy accepted the dismissal philosophically, but called on his lost love to return the gown. She did return it and he has kept it ever since, not as a memento of a buried romance, but as a convenient thing to have on hand in case he should become engaged again. And it is dollars to cents that, if he ever does marry, his wife will be selected primarily on the basis of her fitness for the gown.

Raxworthy also inherits artistic tastes, and is a diligent collector of works of art and *vertu* of all kinds. The price paid for each is affixed to it, and he discourses on the profit at which he can sell it again. But the most remarkable of his hoards is the one which consists wholly of gold and jewels; gold coins of all ages and nations, gold nuggets, gold ornaments of historic as well as intrinsic value, pieces of gold plate—in short, gold in every shape. Then there are precious stones, in settings, separate or in the rough, including many antiques, the whole making a pile big enough to fill a steel-bound strong-box two feet long by eighteen inches wide and a foot deep. It must be worth a great many thousand dollars, and the anomaly is that it lies there collecting no interest. Raxworthy, when attacked on this point, offers various excuses, but the truth is he is a victim to the true miser's mania for gloating over treasure. It is heaven to him to sit over the box and plunge his hands into the jingling piles of Spanish doubloons, Roman coins of the Empire, American double eagles, odds and ends of precious metal, diamonds, rubies, and the rest of it, and to feel the concrete symbols of wealth in his actual grasp. Usury has its charms, but to have his fingers in the glittering contents of that strong-box is a distinct and peculiar

ecstasy which he cannot deny himself. Auromania is as much a disease as dipsomania and as inaccessible to reason. Moreover, Raxworthy's strong-box is a constant menace to his safety and peace of mind, for he insists on keeping it in his own home instead of in a safety vault. He must have it at hand, as the toper his bottle. Nay, he must occasionally speak of it and show it to other people, and the fame of it has gone farther than he perhaps suspects.

Not long ago he received a letter from a gentleman describing himself as the curator of a famous public collection in Europe, asking permission to view his treasure with a prospect of making him an offer for it. Raxworthy was very vain of this evidence of distinction, as he considered it, and spent several hours, much to his satisfaction, in showing the gentleman and another gentleman who accompanied him the box and its contents. They remarked upon the peril of theft to which the treasure was exposed; but he showed them the precautions in the way of locks, bars, spring-guns, and electric alarms with which he had surrounded it, and laughed at their misgivings. The gentlemen then began to discuss the purchase and made him an offer. Raxworthy replied by naming a price more than twice as high. After dickering for a while they retired, promising to communicate their decision later. It is my conviction that had they acceded to Raxworthy's terms he would have backed out of the bargain. He had come to ascribe a sort of magical or supernatural value to it, which outgrew every attempt to fix it. And this leads me to mention another odd trait of his character.

Raxworthy is a confirmed spiritualist. He didn't say much about it, but those who knew him knew that such was the fact. He consulted mediums on business questions, and frequently followed their advice. Whether this advice always turned out well I know not; at all events he never said anything to the contrary, and he went on consulting them. There is no accounting for such vagaries. But we all know that they are constantly observed in men otherwise shrewd and hard-headed. Perhaps it is a natural reaction on their part against the tyranny of the concrete and rational. The present story embodies, among other things, an instance of his experience in this direction.

As I began by saying, I sat down in Raxworthy's box

and ordered a chop and a pint of wine. Raxworthy is frugal in his meals when he pays his own score, but at the expense of others he sometimes becomes convivial. I offered him a share of my bottle, and when, after a few minutes, Sam came along and sat down with us I ordered another pint. Under this influence Raxworthy became talkative.

"You recollect," he said, "those English fellows who came down to see my collection? Well, I thought I hadn't heard the last of them, and the other day I got a letter asking me to meet them in Philadelphia; they wanted to amend their proposition. I locked up my house and went on. When I got there I found there had been some misunderstanding about the date. They had waited for me all the day before and then gone off, leaving a letter saying that they had desired to consider my price, subject to certain conditions, and appointing to meet me in New York this week.

"You are playing in big luck," I remarked.

"What do you know about these folks?" demanded Sam. "Are they what they say they are? Can they carry out their engagements?"

"Oh, they had the best sort of letters of introduction and that sort of thing and they could sign a check for a million."

"Humph! I don't know. Have you consulted our friends on the other side?"

Raxworthy glanced at him sharply. "You mean——"

"Spirits, of course. What else?" returned Sam.

Raxworthy sipped his wine. "You are a sensible man, Sam," he said, "and I believe you recognize the possibility of supersensuous powers guiding our steps in this world. I'm glad to talk to a man who can rise above vulgar prejudice."

"If you mean a reflection on me," I interposed, "I am anxious not to be vulgar, if I have a chance."

He laughed good-naturedly. "Oh, there's no telling what you believe! However, I'll tell you something." He lowered his voice and bent forward. "A medium I know—Mrs. Selkirk—has sent me word that she thinks there's a message waiting for me and that it may have a permanent influence on my fortune and well-being. I'm to meet her this evening."

"I'd like to go with you," said Sam gravely.

"You may come," answered Raxworthy cordially.

"It'll be in the way of a test, you know. And you, too," he added, turning to me. "Of course, you know her fee is $2 for each person. It's a good deal of money, but——"

"Never mind!" said Sam. "We can raise it—for that!"

"All right," Raxworthy responded, a shade of anxiety departing from his face. "At eight o'clock. It may be about those English fellows, you know. I shouldn't be surprised."

* * * * * *

It was not about them, however. I must confess that I was impressed with the performance. Sam was silent and attentive, and seemed to be familiar with such scenes. I wonder if there is anything that man has not experienced! Mrs. Selkirk was a quiet, slender woman of middle age; one of those non-committal faces one fancies one has seen before. She wore black silk, with white ruching about the throat, and white lace on her hair. A thoroughly respectable person. It was a private séance—no one present but ourselves and the spirits. After a few polite preliminaries we went into executive session.

The room was darkened until by my utmost stretch of vision I could just believe that I saw Mrs. Selkirk's white ruching and lace. Gradually a luminous spot appeared and grew in the air above and behind her head. "They are taking me to a house," murmured the medium, "a house in Vernon Street," and I declare that as she said the words the phantom of a house appeared in the midst of the luminous space. It was a small, old brick house, the blinds closed and defaced; the wooden steps leading up to the door were dilapidated; evidently the place was uninhabited.

"Who is in control?" asked Raxworthy in a reverent voice.

The house faded slowly, but something seemed to be coming into existence in another part of the room. It was very faint at first, but after several attempts it became more distinct; it was the figure of a man, or at least the head and shoulders of one. He wore a bell-crowned hat of a fashion at least fifty years old. His face was overshadowed. He bowed and said, in a cracked voice: "Good-evening, good folks. I am Gaffer Peters."

This made me feel a trifle uncomfortable. I turned for support to Sam, but he was invisible in the darkness.

"Glad to see you, Gaffer," said Raxworthy. "Have you any message for us?"

"It is under the hearthstone," was the reply. "In the back sitting-room. It worries me—it worries me! Under the hearthstone. I buried it there." He spoke in detached sentences, barely audible.

"You buried—what?" demanded Raxworthy, a little unsteadily I thought; and for my part I fully expected to hear a ghastly tale of a murder and a corpse.

"Gold and jewels—gold and jewels—a vast treasure," came the response. "I can't rest. Gold and jewels—I buried them there. I can't rest till they're taken away."

"Where is the place, Gaffer?"

"Vernon Street, No. 97. Under the hearth in the back sitting-room. All my treasure. Take it away. I give it to you. Lose no time. It may be too late." As the last words were uttered the apparition vanished. Mrs. Selkirk heaved a deep sigh; the trance was over. I heard Sam step to the gas fixtures and the light was turned on.

"Was it successful? I hope you were satisfied, gentlemen," said the good lady courteously.

"Very successful, indeed, madam," replied Sam, in his deep voice. "It may turn out that our friend Raxworthy is indebted to you for a much greater sum than $2."

"Oh, I can't admit that, you know," exclaimed Raxworthy hastily. "We don't know as yet whether the spirit may not have been mistaken, and besides——"

"I am contented to take my fee and I expect nothing else," interposed Mrs. Selkirk quietly. "If gentlemen meet with any good fortune they are welcome to it, and on the other hand I expect to be relieved of all responsibility for anything that goes wrong. Those are my rules." With that she bowed as an intimation that the audience was at an end, and we departed.

"Now, honestly, what do you think of that?" asked Raxworthy as we emerged into the street.

"I should like a drop of whiskey," said I frankly.

Sam settled his hat on the back of his head and thrust his hands into his pockets.

"I'm a practical man," quoth he, "and I say we ought to put this thing to the test at once. Let's go to Vernon Street—it's not far from here—and find out whether such a house as we saw—No. 97, wasn't it?—is there. After that we can consult what to do next."

The advice was sound, and we took it. Vernon Street turned out to be a small and obscure thoroughfare, somewhere west of Washington Square. It was badly lighted, vilely dirty and given up to a very low order of the population. But I was conscious of a queer sensation when I beheld, nearly at the western extremity of it, the identical building that we had seen in the darkness above Mrs. Selkirk's head. A low, rickety brick edifice of two stories, with blinds rotting from their hinges and tumble-down steps. No one lived in it; beyond question it was the very place. We all three stared at it in silence for at least a minute. At last Sam cleared his throat and spoke.

"Well," said he, "so far, so good. And now, Mr. Raxwothy, what do you propose to do?"

"We must get in there, somehow," replied Raxworthy, "and find out if the back sitting-room——"

"We couldn't do that unless we owned the building," Sam interrupted; "and even if we could and the treasure was there, we couldn't take it away. It would belong to the landlord. That's law, I believe."

"What can we do, then?" Raxworthy inquired.

"There is only one thing you can do if you want the treasure, and that is to buy the house outright," said Sam.

"Dear me! That seems rather extravagant. Couldn't we take a lease of it?"

"A lease wouldn't entitle you to the treasure."

"But suppose there should be no treasure?"

"Exactly! That's where your test comes in. It's a risk, and you may take it or leave it. But there's this to be said—the spirits were right as to the house; why not as to the treasure as well?"

"Yes," said Raxworthy hesitatingly, and manifestly in distress, "but that house would cost a lot of money, and——"

"Well, look here; I'll make this proposition," said Sam, with emphasis. "I'll go shares with you in buying the house, or I'll buy it all myself. But in the

former case we go shares in the treasure, and in the latter I take it all. Is that a bargain?"

"Oh, as to that, I suppose—I'm obliged to you, but—I suppose I might manage to raise the money somehow. Do you suppose I could get it for $500?"

"You might for four or five times that sum," said Sam coldly. "But you'd better let me take it. There's the risk of getting nothing, remember!"

"Yes, I know; still, you know—but, $2,500! That's awful, really! I could get it on two-thirds mortgage, couldn't I? I never paid such a sum for anything. But then there's the treasure—at least, if it should be there! Well, I'll think it over, I guess, and decide in a day or two."

"I'm decided now," said Sam. "I'll buy that house the first thing to-morrow morning. If you don't get before me somebody else may. If the treasure is in it, all right; if not, why, real estate is always real estate and I can get my money back somehow."

"True, I never thought of that!" Raxworthy exclaimed. "Of course I could sell it again if the thing turned out badly; in fact I could anyway. Or, better still, couldn't I lease the place and then look under the hearthstone, and then, if the treasure was there, buy the house? Oh, that's the best scheme of all!"

Sam shrugged his shoulders. "I've told you what I'm ready to do, and unless you buy the house to-morrow and pay for it I shall! So now, gentlemen, if you would like to come back to my place I'll stand you another bottle."

To make a long story short, Raxworthy became the owner of No. 97 Vernon Street the next day. The same afternoon Sam and I, at his invitation, accompanied him to the house, carrying with us a pickaxe and a spade. With some difficulty we effected an entrance. Within, the rooms were dark, owing to the closed blinds, but Sam fortunately found the end of a candle in his overcoat pocket. He lit it, and we proceeded to the back room.

At this point Raxworthy's agitation was almost beyond his control. I was myself not a little excited. Sam alone seemed impassive, but he was circumspect and alert, and as he stooped over the hearthstone I thought I saw the indication of the butt of a revolver in his pocket.

So far everything had coincided with the ghost's prediction. Street, house, room and hearthstone, all were right. Would the treasure be found underneath it? Was it possible that, as we lifted the heavy slab of limestone, the light of our flickering candle would fall upon a flashing heap of jewels and gold? If so, what was one to think about spiritualism? Could any test be more convincing?

"Give me the pick," said Sam. "Stand by to help me with the spade when I get the slab started. In she goes! Now, then, all together! Up she comes! Lay it down there out of the way. Well, what have we got?"

We all went down on our hands and knees and peered into the cavity revealed by the uplifted stone.

Raxworthy, with a sort of desperation, finally thrust in his hand and pulled out some folds of old oilcloth. Apparently this was all that the hole contained. The bottom was covered with dirt and rubbish. Raxworthy groaned.

"Twenty-five hundred dollars for a scrap of oilcloth!"

"You are too previous," said Sam coolly. "We may not be at the bottom of this thing yet. What's this?" And he laid hold of a tuft of something projecting out of the dirt, which resisted his effort to pull it out.

"Bear a hand, will you!" said he. "I'm the only man among you that has any faith, after all!"

We all now laid hold of the projecting tuft and heaved amain. Up came a large and very heavy bag of coarse canvas, which the dirt and rubbish had concealed. It was as much as two of us could lift conveniently, and when we dropped it on the floor beside the hole, there was a jingling sound as of many pieces of metal. Raxworthy's face became ghastly pale, and he panted as if he had run up a flight of stairs. Sam seized the mouth of the bag, which was tied up with string, and tore it open. We looked in and saw a mass of gold coin and the sparkle of precious stones. Raxworthy emitted a wild screech and plunged his hands into the mass.

"So it's all true," remarked Sam composedly. "I'd take the ghost's word for a thousand pounds. There must be at least a hundred thousand dollars' worth in that bag. Well, this is no place to count it over. Let's get it up to your rooms, Mr. Raxworthy, and examine it there."

Somehow or other we got the bag out of the door. Somehow or other a hack happened to be standing before the door, into which we got with the bag. And somehow or other I got the impression that I saw Sam speak to a couple of policemen, who happened to be there, before he got in after us and slammed the door.

In fifteen minutes we were in Raxworthy's rooms with the box. He threw off his coat and wiped his forehead.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he said. "I'll fetch out my strong-box, and we'll count this stuff into it. That'll save time and make all safe. If it turns out as good as it looks I'll make Mrs. Selkirk a present of $5!"

"Don't be rash," said Sam.

"Well, $2, anyway! Will one of you gentlemen help me with the box? It's as heavy as the bag."

"Just about, I should say," muttered Sam. He followed Raxworthy to a door beside the fireplace, which was fastened by a couple of iron bars and a big lock. Raxworthy had his keys in his hand, but on applying them to the locks they would not turn, and further investigation showed that the locks had been forced, though externally there were no signs of it. Raxworthy stopped, and I have seldom seen a human being betray symptoms of such awful consternation.

"Oh! what does this mean?" he stammered, in a thin, croaking voice. "My soul! What is it?"

"It looks like burglary," said Sam, investigating here and there. "Yes, sir, thieves have been at work, and fellows who know their business, too! Open the door and let's see what they've taken."

The door was opened. There stood the box. Raxworthy grasped the handle at one end and lifted it. It came up easily. He pulled it out on the floor in a fury and dashed back the lid. It was as empty as an inventor's pocket-book.

Neither words nor outcries could express Raxworthy's feelings. He simply sat huddled up on the floor staring into the vacant chest, voiceless and almost lifeless.

"A clean job, wasn't it?" Sam observed. "However, they did leave the box, and if you've lost one treasure you've got another. Just pour what's in the bag into the box and say no more about it."

"Ruined! All my gold!" gasped Raxworthy, with a husky sob.

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried Sam, taking the bag in his arms and pouring out the contents on the floor. "What do you call that! Ruined, indeed!"

My stars! What a splendid heap of treasure it was! Doubloons, moidores, double eagles, nuggets, diamonds, rubies and all the rest of it. "It's just your own pile over again," Sam declared. "Neither more nor less."

The rattle and glitter of the royal metal drew Raxworthy's attention in spite of himself. He picked up one of the jewels, then another; then he examined one of the doubloons. Then, with a cry, he snatched up a nugget. "Why, what's this? What's this? What's this?" he burst out again and again. "It's mine—mine, I tell you; all mine! This is what they robbed me of! Am I crazy? What does it mean? My own treasure! How can it be?" He broke into a frantic laugh, and throwing himself face downward on the floor, embraced the shining heap with both arms.

"All I have to say is," remarked Sam, "if you've found the treasure you were robbed of, then you've lost the treasure you found. It's an even thing, anyway, and as good as any man has a right to expect!"

There was a knock at the door, which Sam opened. A policeman stood there. "We've got the men, sir," he said. "They turned up not ten minutes after you'd gone."

"A close shave all round!" returned Sam. "We'll be round at the office to identify 'em to-morrow. That's all. Good-night!" He closed the door again and regarded Raxworthy, wallowing in his gold, with a smile.

"He does love it, doesn't he?" he said. "If every man were as affectionate to his wife—— Well, we may as well leave him for the present. He'll begin to think by to-morrow morning and then he'll be of some use. Come along!"

* * * * * *

What was the meaning of it all?

It was a perplexing case. The two burglars somehow turned out to be the two English gentlemen whom Raxworthy had treated with concerning the proposed sale of his treasure. One of the chief witnesses against them was the original owner of No. 97 Vernon Street, who also, strange to say, was identical with that excellent lady and medium, Mrs. Selkirk. She, I have

since suspected, was not unknown to Sam, and it may be worth mentioning that I once saw in Sam's back office an old bell-crowned hat that reminded me of one I had somewhere seen before.

But is it not singular that the robbers should have concealed their booty in the very spot, of all others, where the ghost of Gaffer Peters bade Raxworthy seek for his own hoard? And if so, what about spiritualism? One thing is certain—Raxworthy did buy the house, but I believe Sam has taken it off his hands since then.

Of all ghostly things, the most ghostly is a phantom ship.

THE STORY OF A PHANTOM BARK.

When, a few days ago, Eben McLoughlin, the master of a small fruit schooner plying between Galveston and Vera Cruz, reported with unmistakable agitation and terror that on his last trip he had encountered a bark of strange build, filled with men whose ghastly, horrible countenances seemed to him those of the dead, it was laughed at as the ridiculous story of a superstitious sailor, having no foundation except in a brain fired by strong drink. But on the same day it received such strong confirmation from Capt. Eric Andersen, of the Norwegian ship *Fair Hilda*, that the authorities began to suspect that something unusual, to say the least of it, was afoot.

Captain Andersen, who had just landed and could have had no previous knowledge of McLoughlin's story, and who is, besides, a gentleman of tried integrity, states that when half a day out from port, and just at early dusk, he perceived close under the bows of his ship a sailing vessel, apparently rushing down upon him. He shouted to the man at the wheel to luff, but before the order could be obeyed the strange bark swept past within what seemed to him ten feet, giving him an instant glimpse of her decks crowded with men, who struck him as being most extraordinarily calm and indifferent to the peril which had threatened their ship, for, leaning over the taffrail or lounging about the deck, not one even raised his head to glance at the *Fair Hilda*. But the thing which puzzled Captain Andersen most was the strange light which pervaded the ship, and which seemed only to outline every spar and rope as if rubbed with phosphorus, without illuminating her or casting shadow. Questioning the man at the wheel as to his carelessness in allowing an accident to become so imminent, the sailor assured the captain that the strange vessel had seemed to spring into being all at once right under the *Hilda's* bows, and that she could not have approached gradually without his seeing her, as he had been gazing straight ahead at the time, and

it was still so light that no difficulty could have been experienced in making her out, covered as she was with full canvas.

Captain Andersen described the vessel as an old-fashioned craft of the kind known as a fore-topsail schooner with a black hull, and with mounted guns, presenting so unmistakable a warlike appearance as to mark her as bound on a belligerent errand and to amaze the captain, who fully expected to hear on reaching port that some unlooked-for war had broken out since he began his voyage. The schooner was also accompanied by two felluccas, and was flying a huge flag, but, owing to the dim light and the rapidity with which she passed and disappeared, her nationality could not be ascertained. No vessel equipped for war could possibly have any business in these waters, and both alarm and astonishment were felt over her presence. Telegrams were at once sent to New Orleans and Key West inquiring if aught was known at either port of such a craft, and were answered not only in the negative, but in a tone of perfect incredulity.

Suspicion had from the first pointed to Mexico or Central America as the hailing point of the mysterious vessel, clearly engaged in no legitimate business, and the seaports of these countries were wired in regard to her, but reply was made in every case, and with undisguised surprise, that no such vessel had or could have left unseen at any point along the coast. From the little port of Santa Maria, however, came an addition to the denial which only served to deepen the mystery. This was the statement that the same vessel, or one answering to the description, had been reported seen in that vicinity at intervals of every few years, but though every facility at hand had been employed to find out her errand, or even the slightest fact about her, she still remained a problem to the authorities. No crew had ever been known to come ashore, and every attempt made to reach her, however slyly planned, had ended in failure and bewilderment, for, though in plain view of the land, when the spot where she had seemed to be anchored was reached, she was found to have disappeared as completely and without trace as a fleck of foam.

It was thought best to pursue investigations quietly, and not to make common talk of the occurrence, but

McLoughlin and the crew of the *Fair Hilda*, who had also seen the ship that so amazed the captain, openly declared their belief that she was a supernatural appearance, and spread the story, which had become the absorbing topic about the wharves. An old sailor, by name Ben Davidson, and familiarly known as "Old Larboard," gave the following explanation of the mystery:

"I've bin a-livin' on this here island nearly fifty years now off and on, 'cept when a-v'yaging, and this is the fifth or sixth time I've seen that 'ere craft stir up a mighty fuss and wonderin', and I'd bet a ship's biscuit against a shark's tooth that this ain't the las' time by a long shot she's goin' to do it. What is she? She's Lafitte's *Pride*, and she ain't goin' to quit these here waters where she did all her devilment till the jedgment day sets her free. The crew she carries is them bloody pirates that used to carouse over this here island, and who sent many an honest sailor man to Davy Jones' locker underneath these here dancin' waves. Lord, Lord, to think o' them a-tryin' to stop her and board her, as I hears they're plannin' to! Might as well think o' ketchin' and holdin' one o' these here witch lights that come o' nights and run up and down a ship's riggin'. Gord help 'em, I says, too, if they did work it to git aboard o' her and face them there spectral tars she carries.

"How does I know what she is and who's aboard her? I knows it 'cause my father, who used to know Jim Campbell, Lafitte's first mate, 'fore he took to piratin', seed him starin' over her taffrail onct, with his throat cut from ear to ear and the blood a-bustin' from it and a-spoutin' out into the water like a whale a-blowin', and Jim he waved his hand at the old man and grinned at him, though his eyes war fixed in his head as glassy as the sea 'fore a blow o' a summer day; and I knows 'cause 'bout ten years ago I run into the 'tarnal thing myself right out here in the bay. The *Robert Lee* was lyin' out a piece, a-goin' fo' suah next day, and I'd shipped aboard her as bos'n, but the evenin' 'fore I got leave to go ashore to tell my Nance good-by, and me and Kit Reeves and Old Dumps, the second mate, and I b'lieve Andy Harper, the cabin boy, but I forgits now, war pullin' ashore a little 'fore dark, but plenty light 'nough to keep out o'

the way o' tugs and other craft, when all to onct Kit Reeves, who was steerin', fetched a horriful screech, and I seed a schooner right ahead o' us loomin' up white as a ghost, for all her canvas was set, though there warn't a breath o' air, and with a blue light a-playin' round her sheets and lines.

"She was right on to us 'fore we could get the oars out o' the water, and I looked for the bump next minnit, but, sirs, as I'm a sinner, we shot plum th'ough the black hull o' the ghost ship, and I tell you, though it didn't take us longer than 'twould to sneeze, every man o' us came out a-shiverin' and shakin' and cryin', with our teeth a-rattlin' an' the har' o' our heads a-standin' up like a cat when it's riled. For 'twas like bein' dipped in ice water, and that so black ye couldn't see no daylight on either side o' it. Leastwise, that's as near as I kin come to tellin' how it seemed, though that don't make ye understand the awful awfulness of it, but I knows I ruther face a naked sabre than the like again.

"Old Dumps he war onsensible for more'n an hour, and Kit Reeves, gone plum crazy, tried to jump overboard, and would a-done it if I hadn't a-helt him tell he got sorter calmed down. When we shot th'ough the spook vessel I gin a look up at her, and I'm a Dutchman from Amsterdam if I didn't see a row of faces looking over the sides at me, and hear 'em a-laughin' and a-screechin' like mad and pintin' their fingers at us, but them faces was the worst, for they wasn't jest the phizzes 'o dead men, but o' men that hed been dead so long that the flesh done turn green with corruption and grave mould. But I didn't get more'n a glimpse o' them, for the next minnit the ship was gone like a puff o' smoke.

"She visits this here port 'bout every ten years, I make it, and I reckon in between whiles goes cruisin' round the spots where she ust to scuttle honest ships. I've heern o' her onct or twict down on the Mexican coast, and a sailor man named Abe Tucker told me, last year, I think 'twas, that she scared the life out o' the watch on one o' the Mallory steamers, off New Orleans, but the captain, who war one o' these here cocksure know-alls, swore they was all drunk when she was reported."

That "Old Larboard" was right in his opinion that

the ship is a supernatural visitor is beginning to be shared by even the most intelligent and skeptical of the community, who have totally failed to find any natural explanation of the appearance. A party of young people enjoying a cruise yesterday about the bay in the steam yacht *Rosemary*, belonging to Col. Hy Wiseman, encountered the phantom ship lying at anchor about two miles out and passed within one hundred feet of her. They say that she was ablaze with a pale, bluish light which cast no radiance about, and that the clash of arms and the shrieks and words of command could be distinctly heard, and, occasionally, a body would seem to be thrown overboard, for the dull splash of water parted was discernible, as at intervals the bay for a space of twenty feet around her would appear blood-red, which was not to be attributed to the sunset sky, as the hue was too deeply crimson for a reflection.

Last evening every available boat was out scouring the bay looking for the phantom bark which answers to the description of the *Pride*, Lafitte's favorite vessel, and which is believed to have foundered near here, with treasure to the amount of $7,000,000 in gold, jewels, and goods, in the midst of a drunken riot among the sailors after the death of the pirate chief, when they returned and carried off the booty he had buried on the island, near the site of the village Campeachy, which he built.

In regard to previous appearances of the ghost ship, Capt. Louis Billings says: "I never told it before for fear of being laughed at, but that vessel helped me to run the blockade in '64, though she scared me so bad in doing it I did not thank her for it. It was late one October evening that I sighted the Federal boats lying off the harbor here, and I was wondering what they meant by taking no notice of me, when I saw that they were firing at a foretop-sail schooner about half a mile distant, which was flying a big black flag, and taking no more notice of the peppering she was getting than a duck of a shower, but was apparently lying motionless, though she was carrying a full head of canvas and the wind blowing something that wasn't very unlike a gale, and a stiff one. Pretty soon one of the gunboats —I heard afterward that it was the *Niagara*, but I may have been misinformed—evidently made up its

mind to see what the schooner meant by such extraordinary behavior, and went for it like a battering ram. I watched it with a good deal of interest through my glass, for I was puzzled, too. The gunboat, keeping up its fire as it went, seemed rather disconcerted as it drew near the black flag, which serenely waited for it without furling a sail or manning a gun, and she had fourteen of the latter as I counted—old-fashioned ones, too. I noticed all at once the gunboat threw itself bodily upon her, and I said to myself: 'Lookout, now!' when to my amazement the Federal vessel seemed to shoot clean through the other, as through a mirage, and the schooner faded in a blood-red mist.

"The other blockaders must have been absorbed in watching the affair too, for I am persuaded they never even saw me, though I was in full view of them. It was dark by the time the gunboat resumed its former position, and, unmolested, I crept into port under the friendly wing of the night. But just before I anchored I was startled by a shriek from one of the men, and running to him, saw that we were jammed against the strange vessel, which seemed afire with a sort of *cold*, weird light, which lit up the figures of a crowd of picturesquely-dressed men, unmistakably buccaneers, who pulled at the ropes and performed their duties with countenances set in death and glassy eyes that glared upon us hideously, while each bore in head or breast or body a bleeding wound.

"The man beside me had fallen on his knees, his teeth chattering while he gasped out a prayer. But, overcoming the terror that was chilling the very marrow of my bones, I rushed forward, shouting as I ran, only to find all dark and quiet over the side of my own vessel, with the water lapping gently against its hull. The schooner had actually vanished before my very eyes, and in the twinkling of an eye, as completely as the lightning flash that a moment before divided yonder cloud."

The story of an unexplained ghost from the French of Guy de Maupassant.

AN APPARITION.

It was at the end of an evening of intimate social chat, in an old family mansion, and each one told a story of his or her personal experience—and vouched for the truth of it. Just then the old Marquis de la Tour-Samuel, eighty-two years old, rose and stood leaning against the chimney-piece, saying in a slightly trembling voice:

I, too, know a strange thing, so strange that it has been the bane of my life. It is now fifty-six years since it happened to me, and not a month has passed without my dreaming of it. I have had ever since that day a mark, a scar of fear, as it were. Yes, I went through such a horrible experience for ten minutes, that ever since I have had a constant terror. Unexpected noises make me tremble to the depths of my heart; things which I cannot see clearly in the twilight make me have a wild desire to run away, and I actually dread nightfall. Oh! I should not have told you all this if I were not so old. Now I can say anything. One is not expected to be brave before imaginary dangers at my age, but I assure you, ladies, that I have never quailed before real ones. This experience affected me so deeply and mysteriously that I have never yet told a soul of it, but have kept the secret locked in my breast, as if it were something unconfessed and to be ashamed of.

I will tell you the adventure as it happened, without trying to explain it. In fact, there is no possible explanation, unless you assume that I was for the time out of my mind. But I was not out of my mind, and I will prove it to you. You may think what you like, but here are the bare facts.

It was in July, 1827, and I was in garrison at Rouen. One day, as I was walking on the quay, I met a man whom I thought I knew, though I could not quite recall who it was. I made instinctively a motion to stop. The stranger saw the movement, looked at me, and fell into my arms. It was a friend of my boyhood, of

whom I was very fond. In the five years since I had last seen him, he seemed to have grown older by half a century. His hair was perfectly white, and he walked with a stoop, as if worn out. He understood my surprise and told me his story. A terrible misfortune had made him a broken man.

Having fallen madly in love with a young girl, he had married her in a sort of ecstasy of happiness. After a year of unalloyed bliss she had suddenly died from some heart trouble, undoubtedly killed by love itself. He left his château the very day of the funeral and came to live in his house in Rouen, alone and desperate, overcome by grief, so miserable that he thought only of suicide.

"Since I have found you again," he said to me, "I am going to ask you to do me a great service. It is to go and look for me in the desk in my room—in our room—for some papers of which I am in great need. I cannot intrust this task to a servant or an agent, because it is necessary to have it done with great discretion and absolute silence. As for me, nothing would induce me to enter that house again. I will give you the key of the room, which I myself locked on leaving, and the key of my desk. You will also have a message from me to my gardener, who will open the château for you. But come and breakfast with me to-morrow, and we will talk it over."

I promised to do him this slight service. It was but a short jaunt for me, his house being situated about five leagues from Rouen.

At ten o'clock the next morning I was with him. We breakfasted together, but he did not speak twenty words. He begged me to excuse him, saying that the thought of the visit which I was going to make to the room where his happiness lay buried was too much for him. He did indeed seem to me to be strangely moved, preoccupied, as if a mysterious struggle were going on in his soul. At last he explained to me exactly what I was to do, which was to get two packages of letters and one of papers which were in the first right-hand drawer of the desk to which I had the key. He added: "I need not ask you not to look about you."

I was a little hurt by these words, and told him so rather sharply. He stammered, "Forgive me, I am suffering so much," and he began to cry.

I left him about one o'clock to do my errand.

It was a glorious day, and I went at a rapid trot across the meadows, listening to the singing of the skylarks and the rhythmical sound of my sword against my boot. Before long I entered the forest and brought my horse to a walk. The branches of the trees brushed my face, and occasionally I bit off a leaf and crunched it eagerly, in one of those ecstasies of life which fills us, we know not how, with a flood of happiness, a sort of intoxication of strength.

As I neared the château, I felt in my pocket for the letter which I had for the gardener, and I saw to my surprise that it was sealed. I was so wounded and provoked that I thought of returning without carrying out my intention. Then I reflected that by doing this I should show unnecessary feeling. My friend had probably sealed the note mechanically, in the trouble he was in.

The house had the air of having been abandoned for twenty years. The entrance gate, open and rotten, remained upright by a miracle. Grass choked the pathways, and the borders of the grass-plots were no longer to be seen.

At the noise which I made by kicking against a shutter, an old man came out of a side door and seemed stupefied at seeing me. I jumped to the ground and gave him my letter. He read it, re-read it, turned it, looked me over, put it in his pocket and said:

"Well, what do you want?"

I answered brusquely:

"You ought to know, as you have just read your master's orders. I want to go into the house."

He seemed overcome and exclaimed:

"Then you are going into—into his room?"

I began to grow impatient. "What! are you going to question me?"

"No, sir, but it has—has not been opened since—since the death. If you will wait five minutes I will go—go see, if——"

I interrupted him angrily. "Oh, indeed; you will get it in order for me when you can't even get in, for I have the key."

He could say no more.

"Then, sir, I will show you the way."

"Show me the staircase and leave me. I can find it very well without you."

"But, sir, indeed——"

This time I quite lost my temper.

"Be silent, or you will get yourself into trouble," and I pushed him roughly aside and entered the house. I passed through the kitchen, then through two little rooms in which the man and his wife lived, and reached a large hall. I climbed the stairs and recognized the door described by my friend. I opened it without difficulty and entered.

The room was so dark that at first I could distinguish nothing. I paused, struck by the mouldy, musty smell of shut-up, lifeless rooms. Then, by degrees, my eyes became used to the gloom, and I saw clearly enough a large disordered room, with a bed without hangings, but with mattress and pillows, of which one still bore the deep imprint of a head, as if some one had just been lying there. The chairs were scattered about, and I noticed that one door, probably that of a closet, was half open.

I went first to the window to get some light, and opened it; but the hinges of the outside shutters were so rusty that I could not move them. I even tried to break the shutters with my sword, but could not succeed.

As I was tired of these useless efforts, and as my eyes were now quite used to the dim light, I gave up the hope of seeing more clearly and went to the desk. I sat down in an easy-chair, lowered the lid, and opened the drawer. It was full to the brim. I only needed three packages and knew how to recognize them, so I began the search.

I was straining my eyes to decipher the superscriptions, when I thought I heard, or rather felt, a slight rustling behind me. I took no notice of it, thinking that a draught of air had made something move. But at the end of a minute, another movement, scarcely perceptible, made a very disagreeable shiver creep over me. It was so silly to be affected, even slightly, that I did not like to turn around, for very shame. I had secured the second bundle that I wanted, and had just found the third, when a deep and painful sigh, breathed over my shoulder, made me leap madly two yards away. I turned in my flight, with my hand on my sword-hilt, and indeed, if I had not felt that at my side I should have fled like a coward.

A large woman, in white, was standing behind the chair in which I had been sitting the instant before, looking at me.

Such a shiver ran through my limbs that I could not stand. Oh! no one who has not felt it can understand this frightful terror. One's brain reels, one's heart stands still, one's whole body becomes like a sponge; it seems as if one's being crumbled. I do not believe in ghosts, but I have yielded to the hideous fear of the dead, and I have suffered—yes, in a few minutes suffered more than in all the rest of my life, in the terrible agony of supernatural fear.

If she had not spoken I might have died! But she did speak, in a sad and gentle voice, which made my nerves quiver. I cannot say that I became master of myself and found my reason again. No, I was so terrified that I no longer knew what I did, but the pride which I have, a pride of my soldier's trade, perhaps, made me keep, in spite of myself, a respectable appearance, both to myself and to her, whatever she was, woman or spectre. I thought of this afterward, for I can tell you that when it happened I thought of nothing. I was simply terror-stricken. She said:

"Oh, sir, you can do me a great favor."

I tried to answer, but I could not utter a word. An indistinct noise came from my lips. She spoke again:

"Will you? You can save me, cure me. I suffer frightfully. I suffer all the time. I suffer, oh! I suffer."

And she sat slowly down in my chair, looking at me.

"Will you?"

I motioned "Yes" with my head, my voice being still paralyzed. Then she held out to me a tortoise-shell comb and murmured:

"Comb my hair, oh! comb my hair. That will cure me. Some one must do it. Look at my head! How I suffer, and how badly my hair is arranged!"

Her unbound hair, very long and black it seemed to me, hung over the back of the chair and touched the floor.

Why did I do it? Why did I take the comb, shuddering, and why did I take in my hands her long hair, which made me feel as cold as if I were handling serpents? I cannot tell.

That feeling has staid in my fingers, and I shiver

to think of it. I combed her hair. I touched—I do not know how—those icy tresses; I twisted and untwisted them; I braided them as they braid a horse's mane. She sighed, bent her head, and seemed happy.

Suddenly she said, "Thank you," took the comb from my hands, and went out by the door which I had noticed was half open.

Left alone, I had for some seconds the terrible fright which one has after the nightmare. Then I came to myself. I rushed to the window and burst open the shutters with a frightful blow.

Daylight flooded the room.

I sprang to the door through which the Something had disappeared.

It was closed and locked.

Then a fever of flight seized me, the true panic of battles. I snatched the three bundles of letters from the open desk, rushed across the room, leaped down the stairs four at a time, found myself outside, I knew not where, and seeing my horse ten feet away, bounded to his back and galloped off. I did not draw rein until I was in front of my lodgings at Rouen, when, throwing the bridle to my orderly, I fled to my room and locked myself in, to think it over.

Then for an hour I asked myself anxiously if I had not been the victim of an hallucination. Yes, I must have had one of those strange nervous freaks which give rise to miracles, and to which the supernatural owes its strength.

And I had come to believe it was a vision, a deception of the senses, when I happened to go near the window.

My eyes accidentally fell on my breast. My coat was covered with hairs, long hairs of a woman, which were caught around the buttons. I took them one by one, and threw them out of the window with trembling fingers.

Then I called my orderly. I was too much disturbed to go to see my friend that day, and besides, I wanted to decide what I ought to tell him. I sent him the letters, for which he gave the soldier a receipt. He asked a great many questions about me.

They told him that I was suffering, that I had had a sunstroke, that—I do not know what.

He seemed uneasy.

I went early the next morning to see him, resolved to tell him the truth.

He had gone out the evening before and had not returned. I went again during the day, but no one had seen him. I waited a week. He did not appear.

Then I notified the authorities. They searched for him everywhere, without discovering the slightest trace of his flight.

A thorough search was made of the deserted château, but no discoveries were made.

There was no sign of a woman's having been concealed there.

The search amounting to nothing, it was given up. And after fifty-six years I have learned nothing. I know no more.

The heroic self-sacrifice of beautiful women—of all the stories of this nature, this one, which has reached the club by mail, unsigned, has been voted the best.

THE BLACK CROSS.

A BLACK cross had been set against Judge Hawkins' name. Why it is not for me to say. We were not accustomed to explain our motives or to give reasons for our deeds. The deeds were enough, and this black cross meant death; and when it had been shown us, all that we needed to know further was at what hour we should meet for the contemplated raid. A word from the captain settled that, and when the next Friday came a dozen men met at the place of rendezvous ready for the ride which should bring them to the judge's solitary mansion across the mountains. I was among them, and in as satisfactory a mood as I had ever been in in my life, for the night was favorable and the men hearty and in first-rate condition.

But after we had started and were threading a certain wood I began to have doubts. Feelings I had never before experienced assailed me with a force that first perplexed and then astounded me. I was afraid, and what rather heightened than diminished the unwonted sensation was the fact that I was not afraid of anything tangible, either in the present or future, but of something unexplainable and peculiar, which, if it lay in the skies, certainly made them look dark indeed, and if it hid in the forest, caused its faintest murmur to seem like the utterance of a great dread, as awful as it was inexplicable.

I nevertheless proceeded, and should have done so if the great streaks of lightning, which now and then shot zigzag through the sky, had taken the shape of words and bade us all beware. I was not one to be daunted, and knew no other course than that of advance when once a stroke of justice had been planned and the direction for its fulfilment marked out. I went on, but I began to think, and that to me was an experience, for I had never been taught to reflect—only to fight and obey.

The house toward which we were riding was built on

a hillside, and the first thing we saw on emerging from the forest was a light burning in one of its distant windows. This was a surprise, for the hour was late, and in that part of the country people were accustomed to retire early, even such busy men as the judge. He must have a visitor, and a visitor meant a possible complication of affairs; so a halt was called, and I was singled out to reconnoitre the premises.

I started off in a strange state of mind. The fear I had spoken of had left me, but a vague shadow remained, through which, as through a mist, I saw the light in that far-away window beckoning me on to what I felt was in some way to make an end of my present life. As I drew nearer to it the feeling increased; then it, too, left me, and I found myself once more the daring avenger. This was when I came to the foot of the hill and discovered I had but a few steps more to take.

The house, which had now become plainly visible, was a solid one of stone, built, as I have said, on the hillside. It faced the road, as was shown by the large portico dimly to be discerned in that direction, but its rooms were mainly on the side, and it was from one of these that the light shone. As I came yet nearer I perceived that these rooms were guarded by a piazza, which, communicating with the portico in front, afforded an open road to that window and a clear sight of what lay behind it. I was instantly off my horse and upon the piazza, and before I had time to realize that my fears had returned to me with double force, I had crept stealthily toward that uncurtained window and looked in.

What did I see? At first nothing but a calm, studious figure bending above a batch of closely-written papers, upon which the light shone too brightly for me to perceive much of what lay behind them. But gradually an influence, of whose workings I was scarce conscious, drew my eyes away, and I began to discover on every side strange and beautiful objects which greatly interested me, until suddenly my eyes fell upon a vision of loveliness so enchanting that I forgot to look elsewhere and became for the moment nothing but sight and feeling.

It was a picture, or so I thought in the first instant of awe and delight. But presently I saw that it was a woman, living and full of the thoughts that had never been mine, and at the discovery, a sudden trembling

seized me, for I had never seen anything like her beauty, while she saw nothing but the man who was bending over his papers. There was a door or something dark behind her, and against it her tall, strong figure, clad in a close white gown, stood out with a distinctness that was not altogether earthly.

But it was her face that held me and made of me from moment to moment a new man. For in it I discerned what I had never believed in till now, devotion that had no limit and love which asked nothing in return. She seemed to be faltering on the threshold of that room, as one who would like to enter but does not dare, and in another moment, with a smile that pierced me through, she turned as if to go. Instantly I forgot everything but my despair, and leaned forward with an impetuosity that betrayed my presence. She glanced quickly toward the window, and, seeing me, turned pale, even while she rose in height till I felt myself shrink and grow small before her.

Thrusting out her hand she caught from the table before her what looked like a small dagger, and holding it up, advanced upon me with blazing eyes and parted lips, not seeing that the judge had risen to his feet, not seeing anything but my face glued against the pane, and staring with an expression that must have struck to the heart as surely as her look pierced mine. When she was almost upon me I turned and fled. Hell could not have frightened me, but heaven did; and for me that woman was heaven whether she smiled or frowned, gazed upon another with love or raised a dagger to strike me to the ground.

How soon I met my mates I cannot say. In a few minutes, doubtless, for they had stolen after me and had detected me running away from the window. I was forced to tell my tale, and I told it unhesitatingly, for I knew I could not save him—if I wanted to—and I asked that she be spared not only from sharing his fate, but from the sight of his death, for she loved him.

This from me! No wonder the captain stared, then laughed. But I did not laugh in return, and, being the strongest man in the band and the surest with my rifle, he did not trifle long, but listened to my plans and, in part, consented to them, so that I retreated to my post at the gateway with something like confidence, while he, approaching the door, lifted the knocker and let it

fall with a resounding clang that must have rung like a knell of death to the hearts within.

For the judge knew our errand; I saw it in his face when he rose to his feet, and he had no hope, for we had never failed in our attempts, and the house, though strongly built, was easily assailable.

* * * * * *

While the captain knocked, three men had scaled the portico and were ready to enter the open windows if the judge refused to parley, or offered any resistance to what was known as the captain's will.

"Death to the judge!" was the cry, and it was echoed not only at the door but around the house, where the rest of the men had drawn a cordon ready to waylay any one who sought to escape. Death to the judge! And the judge was loved by that woman and would be mourned by her till— But a voice is speaking, a voice from out that great house, and it asks what is wanted and what the meaning is of these threats of death.

And the captain answers short and sharp:

"The Regulator commands, but he never explains. What he commands now is for Judge Hawkins to come forth. If he shrinks or delays, his house will be entered and burned, but if he will come out and meet like a man what awaits him, his house shall go free and his family remain unmolested."

"And what is it that awaits him?" pursued the voice.

"Four bullets from four unerring rifles," returned the captain.

"It is well; he will come forth," cried the voice, and then in a huskier tone: "Let me kiss the woman I love. I will not keep you long."

And the captain answered nothing, only counted out clearly and steadily, "One—two—three," up to a hundred; then he paused, turned and lifted his hand; when instantly our four rifles rose, and at the same moment the door, with a faint grating sound I shall never forget, slowly opened and the firm, unshrinking figure of the judge appeared.

We did not delay. One simultaneous burst of fire, one loud quick crack, and his figure fell before our eyes. A sound, a cry from within, then all was still, and the captain, mounting his horse, gave one quick whistle and galloped away. We followed him, but I was the last to mount, and did not follow long, for at

the flash of those guns I had seen a smile cross our victim's lip, and my heart was on fire, and I could not rest till I had found my way back to that open doorway and the figure lying within it.

There it was, and behind it a house empty as my heart has been since that day. A man's dress covering a woman's form—and over the motionless, perfect features that same smile which I had seen in the room beyond, and again in the quick glare of the rifles.

I had harbored no evil thought concerning her, but when I beheld that smile now sealed and fixed upon her lips, I found the soul I had never known that I possessed until that day.

There are no better stories of adventure in the world than the narratives of many of the experiences of the early settlers in the West; and one evening when stories of adventure were in order at the Story Club, "The Tavern in the Woods," by "M. Quad," was read from the New York *Weekly*.

THE TAVERN IN THE WOODS.

In the year 1832, my uncle, Silas Wright, living in Chenango County, New York, decided to make a trip to Michigan, with a view to settling there. He had a family and was a man of considerable means. He was a stout, hearty man, who had made his property by hard work, and he was just the man who would defend his means with his life if occasion required.

He reached Detroit without adventure, and after spending a day or two in the city to make inquiries, he determined to travel into the interior and look up some land. He had about a thousand dollars with him, mostly in bank-notes, and he took a friend's warning and purchased a pair of double-barrelled pistols and a good knife. He learned from the newspapers and from citizens that many lawless characters were prowling about the interior of the Territory, and his preparations were only a matter of prudence. I have often heard him tell of what befell him on his trip, and I now let him tell it to the reader.

"I left Detroit in company with a man named David Comstock, from Ohio, who was in the Territory on the same mission—to locate a farm for himself. After making due inquiries, and learning that some very choice government land could be found by travelling northeast, we took our departure on foot. It was in September. The roads were in bad condition, and we believed that we could get along better on foot than with saddle-horses, especially as we might have trouble in finding provender for the beasts, and as we would now and then want to leave the road, which ran northeast, and was little better than a path. The trees had been cut down in some places, to make a highway some thirty feet wide, and again the path wound among the trees so that the passage of a vehicle would have been an impossibility. There was not a bridge on the route,

and the cabins of the settlers were sometimes miles apart. All the goods and provisions taken in had to be packed on horses, or carried on the backs of the settlers.

"Comstock had about five hundred dollars with him. The money was all in gold, in five and ten dollar gold pieces, and he had it tied up in a handkerchief and thrust into his bosom. He was armed with a single-barrelled pistol only, not having so much as a jack-knife besides. So far as I could judge he was not the man for an emergency, having but little confidence in his pistol and none at all in himself. He had heard of the horse-thieves, counterfeiters, and desperadoes we should be likely to encounter, and we had hardly lost sight of the city when he began to express his fears that we were unwise in making the trip.

"During the forenoon we met several hunters and quite a number of settlers, most of them on their way into Detroit. Every man carried a rifle, most of them a pistol and knife, and all were uncouth and savage-looking in our eyes. We had started out soon after seven o'clock, and despite the bad condition of the path for a part of the way, had made a distance of thirteen miles, when we sat down on a log to eat our dinner. We had provided ourselves with dried beef, crackers, cheese, and other articles, enough to last for two or three days, and each of us had a stout blanket, being warned that we might have to depend on ourselves for provisions and lodgings.

"We had passed at least two miles beyond civilization, and just previous to eating had been told by a traveller that we would not find another cabin for five miles. We had seen no land to suit us as yet, and were determined not to end our trip until we had seen the fine timbered country which was said to lie awaiting purchasers and settlers within two days' tramp of Detroit.

"After satisfying our hunger, and while I was gathering up and packing away the remains of the meal, Comstock discovered that his money was not securely tied up, and he drew out his handkerchief to retie the knot. He knew that I had money. I knew of his gold, and so he did not hesitate to unfold the handkerchief and exhibit the bright yellow pieces, which looked truly tempting in the September sunlight.

"'That's a fair share of gold for a man to carry around in the woods. I hain't seed so much for a year.'

"We looked up, to find a man standing within three feet of us—a wicked-looking fellow, with long red hair, red beard all over his face, and a pair of eyes which would not have been out of place in the head of a wolf.

"He stood leaning on a heavy rifle, and his appearance petrified us for a moment. He must have been watching us for some time from behind some of the large trees, and had taken advantage of the moment when we bent over the gold to step out and come nearer.

"My hand went up to my breast and pulled at the butt of one of the pistols, but a fiendish smile showed itself in the stranger's eyes. He lifted his rifle a little and remarked:

"'None o' that, stranger. I kin put a bullet into your eye before you git that plaything half ready to shoot.'

"'Who are you, and what do you want?' I inquired, considerably excited, and not at all liking the fellow's words and looks.

"'Ez to that,' he replied, grinning like a baboon, and lowering his rifle again, 'it's none o' yer business, but I don't mind telling ye. I ar' called Hank Williams by some, an' others call me what they please. I don't ginerally tell my business to strangers; but in this case I ar' free to say that I goes where I likes, comes when I wish, an' stays ez long ez I car' to!'

"He laughed as he ceased speaking—a laugh more like the growl of a bull-dog than anything else, and his eyes roved back to the gold, which Comstock, in his amazement, had nearly forgotten and quite neglected. My friend caught his look, and was not a minute in tying up and stowing away his money.

"'Land-hunters, I s'pose?' remarked the stranger, after a pause which neither of us was inclined to break, anxious as we were to get rid of the man, and hoping that he would take himself away.

"I replied that we were of that class, and proceeded to make some inquiries of the man, realizing that it was more prudent to be civil than to exhibit our dislike of his presence. I praised the country, remarked on the civility of the pioneers whom we had thus far encountered, and offered the fellow our provision bag.

"'Yes, this ar' a fine country,' he remarked, never

noticing the provisions. 'I'd like to tramp with ye fer two or three days an' show ye some of the finest land in the world, but I've got a press of business just now, an' ye'll have to excoose me—ha! ha! ha!'

"I could not see anything mirthful in his remarks, especially as his face grew more wicked as he uttered them, but I made no reply, and he walked off, we continuing to watch him until he was hidden among the trees.

"Comstock was greatly frightened at the incident, and was for setting out for Detroit immediately, declaring that the man having seen his gold, would follow and murder us at the first opportunity.

"While I believed the man's cupidity had been excited, and that he might not hesitate to commit murder for the sake of gold, I would not listen to Comstock's idea of going back. I argued that we could plunge into the woods, make a long detour, and then throw the man off our trail, if he intended following us, or we could keep the path and take a run for a mile or two, getting among the settlers again before Williams, as he called himself, could come up.

"Talking in this way Comstock's fears finally vanished, and we started off and ran for a mile without a halt. Then, walking another mile at a fast pace, we concluded that we were safe from pursuit, and at the end of the next mile had almost forgotten the noonday incident.

"We were getting into a finer country; the road was better defined, the settlers' cabins were more frequent, and Comstock felt quite jolly, boasting that we could have easily finished off the hunter had he attempted violence.

"About four o'clock in the afternoon we came upon a prairie about forty acres in extent, and paused for a moment to survey it. The hieroglyphics on a tree near the path showed that the land had already been applied for, and we envied the lucky man. We were then a mile beyond the last cabin, where a woman had informed us that we would have the same distance to tramp from the prairie before reaching another. She had further informed us that four miles on would bring us to 'The Log Tavern,' which was situated at a spot where 'the west road' crossed this one.

"As I stood leaning against a tree, looking about, I

caught sight of something moving out from behind a large oak about fifty feet away.

"Looking sharply, I saw a fur cap appear, then a mass of red hair, and then the face of Williams! He must have seen that my face was turned toward him, for he drew his head quickly back, and I saw no more of him, though I continued looking at the tree until Comstock had moved on quite a distance.

"It was now certain that the man was dogging our steps. We had failed to elude him by our run, and I felt, as I started on after my friend, that the villain would shoot at one or the other as we moved out on the prairie. If I turned about and walked up to his hiding-place, he would be sure to shoot me; if we kept on, he might pass the opportunity by. Thus I reasoned as I followed Comstock.

"If you have never experienced the feeling that an enemy is behind you, prepared to lodge a bullet in your body, having an inclination to do so, and you expecting he will do so, you cannot imagine how I felt. The chills danced up my spine, I felt my hair crawl, my knees were weak, and had Comstock looked around he would have seen a pale face. I was thirty rods or so from the tree behind which I knew the villain to be hiding, when the feeling became so oppressive that I stopped and wheeled about, determined to see if the man was in sight.

"The movement saved my life. As I wheeled, a bullet cut through the rim of my slouch hat, passed close to Comstock, and went singing over the prairie. Then we heard the report of a rifle, and both caught the smoke from the tree.

"'Great heavens! who did that?' exclaimed Comstock, his face as white as a sheet.

"I knew Williams had tried to murder one of us, but as he did not make his appearance from behind the tree after a moment's waiting, I concluded not to tell my friend what I had seen.

"'It was a stray shot from a hunter's rifle,' I replied, as coolly as I could. 'We had better move on.'

"As we turned, about a dozen Indians, all on foot, appeared on the farther side of the prairie, and I knew we were safe from another shot. By hurrying across the prairie, we should have a good start on the villain, who would not cross until we had entered the timber,

and we could make the distance to the nearest dwelling.

"We had passed the Indians with a mere word, and after entering the timber, ran almost every step of the way to the cabin. It lacked only an hour of sundown when we reached it, and we had made up our minds to stop there for the night. Great was our disappointment, therefore, to find the door nailed up, and rude letters on it announcing, 'gOne BaCk to ohIO—curse suCH A Country!'

"The furniture had all been taken out, the place had a lonesome look, and, at the risk of another shot from Williams, I advised that we push on to the Log Tavern. Comstock agreed, and just at sunset, without having seen or heard our enemy, we arrived at our destination.

"The name given the hamlet was Smith's Corners. Besides the tavern, which was only a fair-sized log-house, there was a sort of trading-post and the house of another settler. The whole clearing was not over six acres in extent. We saw corn and pumpkins growing in a field, but the balance of the clearing was covered with brush, stumps, and logs. A dozen Indians stood around the door of the trading-post, others were riding away, and the scene was wild and savage enough to have satisfied the cravings of any romancer.

"There was no one present as we walked into the tavern, nearly half of which was partitioned off as a public room. Benches were ranged around the walls, a huge fire-place occupied one end, and a keg of whiskey and a pint-cup rested on the end of one bench.

"'Hillo, strangers,' cried a voice, as we drew up before the fire, for the night was quite chilly. 'Which way did ye come from?'

"I leaped up as I heard the tones, and as I turned and caught sight of a red head, a face covered with bristles, and two hyena eyes, I looked to see where the man's rifle was, believing him to be Williams. The same voice, same hair and bristles—it was he or his brother!

"'What's the matter?—lost yer power o' answering a civil question?' continued the man, appearing somewhat put out at our astonishment—Comstock having the same feeling.

"'I—I—thought you were some one—some one else!' I replied, finding my voice at last.

"'Ha! ha! How can I be some one else and still be Dan Green?' laughed the man—the same 'ugh! ugh!' which Williams had uttered. 'But you ar' from Detroit, I s'pose, an' I calkerlate that you mean you want to stay all night?'

"I replied that we so desired, and he went to a door and called to 'Jane' to get supper ready for two. He then threw another log on the fire, took a drink of whiskey, and went out, saying that the woman would call us when the meal was prepared.

"'That's the same man who met us at noon!' whispered Comstock, his hand shaking as he laid it on my arm.

"'I thought so at first, but he is not,' I replied. 'This man has a scar across his forehead, while the other had none.'

"When the man had drunk from the cup, he pushed up his cap, and I caught sight of the scar. I had also observed that he was shorter and stouter than Williams, and felt satisfied that he had a separate identity. However, I had made up my mind that the pair were brothers. No two men not of the same blood could look so near alike, and have voices so singularly brutal and unpleasant. I did not dare to tell Comstock of this opinion, as I saw that he was already badly frightened. Anything further, I feared, would completely upset him.

"I was doing my best to reassure my friend, when the woman called us to supper. The fare consisted of corn coffee, Johnny cake, and salt pork, and the appearance of the room was in keeping with it. The woman was tall and stout, her hair cut short, her eyes black and ugly, and I did not like her looks in the least. She watched us covertly while we ate, and did not so much as utter a word.

"During the meal I made up my mind that we would settle for our supper and leave the house for a night in the woods, feeling that we should be as safe with the wild beasts as with such evil-looking people. But as we walked to the door I saw that a cold drizzling rain had commenced to fall, and the fire felt so comfortable that I did not broach my plan to Comstock. Perhaps we were too suspicious, and, being unused to the way of the pioneers, had wronged the people about us. I was pursuing this train of thought when the

landlord came in, replenished the fire, and chatted so civilly about the country, the people, the chances, etc., that I quite forgot my former suspicions.

"It came to be nine o'clock almost before I knew it. One or two Indians had come and gone, the atmosphere had grown colder, the fire felt more and more comfortable, and I was ready to doze as the landlord went to see about our bed. He had just stepped out, when Comstock gave a cry of alarm, his face blanched:

"'Look there! Look at that face against the window!'

"I turned quickly about, but could see no face—only the panes wet with the rain.

"'Either the landlord or the man who met us in the woods was looking through that window!' said Comstock, as I turned again to the fire.

"I was about to ask for further information, when the landlord came back and announced that we could turn in. He also told us that it had been arranged for Comstock to sleep down-stairs; but my friend at once protested so strongly against this that we were both allowed to mount the rough ladder to the loft over the bar-room, where some skins and quilts had been spread.

"'We shall both be murdered before morning!' whispered my friend, as soon as the landlord had retired.

"He then informed me further in regard to the face at the window, and was so sure he had seen Williams that I finally agreed with him that there might be danger, and told him of the relationship which I believed existed between the two men. We were in for it in any case, and the most we could do was to prepare for what might happen. We looked to our pistols, saw that they were in order, and then agreed to take turns in watching, so that the villains could not surprise us if they meant us harm. Neither of us was to undress, but, if not disturbed, we could manage to get a little sleep as we were. Purposely or otherwise, the landlord had given us not more than an inch of candle, and this burned out while we were talking.

"The floor was a loose affair, and the light from the bar-room fire shone up through a dozen cracks. The ladder led from the kitchen, was placed about twenty feet from our bed, and there was no door above, nothing whatever to prevent any one from making the ascent.

"As I was to take the first watch, Comstock removed his gold from his bosom, laid it on the skins, and then laid down. I crawled carefully over the floor until I found a crack large enough to allow me to have quite a view of the room below, and then set myself to watch and listen.

"The landlord sat for a while before the fire, an Indian came in, got some whiskey and went out, and after another hour the tavern-keeper covered up the fire and went into the other room.

"Long before this, despite his alarm, Comstock had fallen soundly asleep. I maintained my place for another hour, without hearing the least noise, and then crawled over on the bed.

"Two hours more went by, and then, believing that we had been unreasonably frightened and that we should not be disturbed, I woke up my friend, told him that everything was quiet, and consulted him as to whether we should not both go to sleep. He concluded to watch for an hour at least, and I got under the blanket and left him sitting up, his pistol in his hand. We had a few words of conversation, congratulating ourselves that we would safely pass the night, and then I went to sleep. I did not intend to; I meant, in my mind, to remain awake, feeling that he was the weaker one, but I was tired and worn and could not resist nature. The last I remember was of feeling the man crawling toward the head of the ladder from off the bed.

"After-events showed that I slept about an hour, when I was suddenly awakened by a heavy thud, a loud scream, and I sprang up to see a lantern setting on the floor, a man stabbing at Comstock, who was lying on his back, and another coming toward me with a hatchet in his hand!

"What I did I do not know. The whole thing is like a dream. I heard shots, shouts, remember of feeling like a wild beast, and when I was over my horrible nightmare there were three dead men in the loft, and the trader and a half-dozen Indians were in the room below shouting and yelling. They came up the ladder, took my pistols away, helped me down, and then I fainted away like a woman and scarcely knew anything until daylight.

"Then there was a horrible sight for me on the bar-

room floor. Comstock with his head split open and three knife-wounds in his breast—the landlord, shot twice in the head—Williams, his brother, shot through the heart—all dead and cold. How I killed the men I don't know. I don't even remember of having my pistols in my grasp.

"We made out that poor Comstock had crawled toward the ladder to listen, and overcome by his day's tramp and its exciting events, had fallen asleep, to be murdered by the plotting rascals as they came up. The woman had fled, fearing punishment, and the victims were all there. Such an officer as a coroner was unknown, and so, after the trader had taken a record of my statement, three graves were dug in the forest and the bodies covered up without ceremony. The gold and the other personal property of Comstock was handed over to me to forward to his wife, and at dusk I was in Detroit, satisfied to go back home and stay there. A month after my return to Chenango County I received two hundred dollars in gold, that being the reward which the territorial officers had offered for the apprehension of Williams, whose real name was McCarthy, a notorious desperado, who had been driven out of Pennsylvania. The officers were better satisfied with his death than they would have been with his arrest."

The desperation brought by the horrors of solitary confinement is an incident in many novels. This story, which tells the crowning horrors of such a situation, is from "Les Morts Bizarres," by Jean Richepin, and it was translated for *The Evening Post*, of New York, by Mr. Walter Learned.

THE WET DUNGEON-STRAW.*

HE had passed his first ten years in prison without doing anything, settling himself and fitting himself to the habits of the place. Then, as there were yet twenty years of prison life before him, he said one fine morning that it was shameful to lead so idle a life, and that he must create for himself some occupation worthy, not of a freeman, since he was a prisoner, but worthy simply of a man.

He devoted a year to reflection, to weighing the different ideas which presented themselves, to seeking a definite aim for his existence. To educate a spider? An old story too well known. To copy Pellico, indeed! A pure bit of plagiarism. To count with his fingers the rough places on the wall? A ridiculous amusement, useless and without appreciable results.

"I must," said he, "find something at the same time novel, useful, and defying. I must invent a task which shall occupy my time, which shall be productive of some good, and which shall have the value of a protest." Another year was employed in this search, and at last success crowned his efforts.

It was a veritable dungeon, that in which the prisoner lived, which the sun entered but for one short half-hour daily, and then by a single ray which was a mere thread of light. The bed on which the unhappy man stretched his aching limbs was a pile of wet straw.

"The very thing," he cried with energy. "Now I shall defy my jailers and cheat the courts."

First he counted the separate straws that made up his bundle. There were one thousand three hundred and seven straws. A meagre bundle!

Then he made an experiment to find out how long

* Translated from "Les Morts Bizarres" of Jean Richepin, by Walter Learned.

it would take to dry a single straw. Three-quarters of an hour. It would require for them all—for the one thousand three hundred and seven straws—a total of nine hundred and eighty hours and fifteen minutes, with a half hour of sunshine a day, nineteen hundred and sixty-one days. Calculating that the sun would not shine at least one day out of three, it would require sixteen years, one month, one week and six days. He set to work at once.

Every day that the sun shone the prisoner carried a straw and put it in the sunshine, busying himself thus whenever there was sun. For the rest of the time he kept warm under his clothes the straws which he had been able to dry.

Thus ten years passed. The prisoner slept on only a third of the bundle of the damp straw, and he had stuffed in the bosom of his blouse the other two-thirds which, one by one, he had dried.

Fifteen years passed. Happiness unspeakable! Only one hundred and twenty-six damp straws remained.

Eighty-four days more, and the prisoner could scarcely contain himself. Proud of his work, victor over circumstances, he cried with the voice of an avenger, with a mocking, rebellious laugh:

"Ah! ah! You condemned me to the wet straw of a dungeon. Well, weep with rage! I sleep on dry straw."

Alas! A cruel destiny was watching for its prey.

One night while the prisoner dreamed of the happiness in store for him, in his wild joy he threw out his hands in speechless exultation, overset his water-jug, and the water ran trickling down his breast.

All of the straws were wet.

What to do now? To begin again the toil of Sisyphus? To pass fifteen years more putting straws to dry in the slender ray?

Oh, the discouragement of it! You, the fortunate ones of the world, who give up a pleasure if twenty-five steps are necessary for its acquisition, dare you cast at him the first stone?

But, you say, he had only a year and a half more in prison.

And do you count as nothing wounded pride, fallen hope? Think! this man would have worked fifteen years to sleep on a bundle of dry straw, and should he

consent to quit his prison with wet straws clinging to his hair? Never! One is either worthy or unworthy.

Eight days and nights he writhed in agony, wrestling with despair, striving for a foothold in the ruin which overwhelmed him.

He finished by losing his hold and by acknowledging defeat. He had lost the battle.

One evening he fell on his knees, despairing, broken.

"O God," he cried in his tears, "pardon me that I have lost courage to-day. I have suffered for thirty years. I have felt my limbs waste, my skin mortify, my eyes grow dim and my hair and teeth fail me. I have resisted hunger, thirst, cold, and solitude. I had a hope which sustained my efforts. I had an aim in my life. Now it is impossible to satisfy my hope. Now the aim is gone forever. Pardon me that I desert my post, that I quit the field of battle, that I flee like a coward. I can bear it no longer." Then in a sudden access of indignation he cried:

"No, no, a thousand times no! It shall not be said that I have lost my life for nothing. I will not desert. I am not a coward. No, I will not sleep for a minute more on the damp straw of the dungeon. No, they shall not defeat me."

And the prisoner died during the night, conquered like Brutus, grand like Cato.

He died of an heroic indigestion. He had eaten all his straw.

And as for sieges in India, none was ever more desperate than this, which came to the Club from the New York *Sun*.

A HARD STRUGGLE.

We of the Twenty-third British Pioneers, supported by half of the Fifth Regiment of Goorkas, had the advance as we moved out of Peshawur for Cabul. Skirmishing began as soon as we were out of the fortifications, and for four hours we were pestered and annoyed and put to considerable loss of life. Then we reached the mountain pass known as the Kashwa, and here a road came in from the north called the Dark Way. While the column rested, two hundred of us Pioneers pushed up this Way for a mile on a reconnoissance, and found a small, but strong, stone fort, which had just been deserted by the natives. Word was sent back, and the result was that B Company, which numbered forty-seven men, was detailed to occupy the fort, which we at once christened "Fort Baker."

The officer in command was Lieutenant Frayne, seconded by the orderly sergeant and a first corporal. We had been badly broken up in the campaign and our commissioned and non-commissioned officers were badly scattered, some dead, some in the hospital, others on detached service. I was the corporal alluded to above. The fort was built at a spot where the way or road left the hills and crossed a valley about half a mile wide. We were at the southern edge of this valley on a detached hill, which was higher than any other ground within gunshot. There was a fine spring on this hill, and the natives had inclosed it in a square fort covering one hundred square feet of ground.

The garrison of this fort had been called out to assist in holding the main pass against our army, and it had departed in such a hurry that we found four hundred pounds of powder, six hundred pounds of lead, forty muskets, sixty blankets, and a large stock of provisions left behind. There was also both shell and grape-shot for the field-piece. Not doubting that we should be besieged as soon as the army was out of sight, we set to work to make everything snug. The gateway was

blocked, the extra muskets loaded, and the men assigned to positions in squads. We took possession about noon, and up to four o'clock the sounds of fighting in the main pass came plainly to our ears. They had scarcely died away when we caught sight of sixty Afghans approaching us by a narrow pathway from the west. They had been down in the Kashwa fighting our column, but had been driven off. They were a portion only of the garrison; the balance had been killed by British bullets. These fellows approached us without the slightest suspicion, and their first warning was a volley which knocked over a full dozen.

On that famous march to Cabul the watchword was "Pass on." In more than a score of instances the British army left native garrisons to the right, left, or rear of them. There was about as much danger in the rear as in the front. It was constant warfare on a line a hundred miles long. We knew pretty well what to look for, and were in no wise disappointed when the sun went down to find ourselves besieged by a force of at least three hundred natives. Our *coup* had dumfounded them, however, and not a gun was fired during the afternoon or night. They must plan how best to overcome us. And the problem no doubt worried them. We had four stout walls ten feet high, oceans of the purest water, and provisions for sixty days. It was hard to figure against that, and we turned in that night with a feeling that we would be left undisturbed. Nothing whatever occurred to alarm us, and during all next forenoon we did not catch sight of a native. Exactly at noon a native bearing a flag of truce came across the valley. As we did not want him to know our strength, I was sent out to meet him ten paces from the gate.

"I demand the surrender of the fort," he said in broken English.

"And if we surrender?" I asked.

"You will all be put to death."

"But if we refuse?"

"It will be death just the same."

"Then we refuse."

The native stalked off without another word or look, and soon disappeared across the valley. Ten minutes later three field-pieces opened fire on us with solid shot from the cover of a mass of rocks and bushes about six hundred yards away. Every ball struck the north wall,

but they might as well have been bullets for all the harm they did. We let them fire away for half an hour, and then four of the men who carried elephant rifles which had been picked up at Peshawur went to the loopholes and dropped two gunners apiece inside of two minutes. This caused the battery to withdraw in a hurry, and we were bothered no more that afternoon. Piled against the eastern wall of the fort on the inside was a large quantity of heavy poles and rude planks. We had at first supposed this material to have been brought in for firewood, and had used some of it for our fires. It now occurred to the lieutenant that there were not enough loopholes in the wall to accommodate even our small force, and that the natives had brought in that stuff to erect platforms. He at once set the whole force at work and we did not knock off until midnight. Then we had a solid platform against the north and east walls, being about seven feet high. This would enable us to use the top of the walls as a breast-work. The other two sides of the fort could not be scaled because of nature of the ground.

The night passed quietly, and some of our men began to think the natives had withdrawn from our locality to go to the front. Those of us who had fought them before knew better. At eight o'clock I got upon the platform with a spyglass, and looking into the thickets on the other side of the valley, I was sure I could see at least five hundred natives. That was really only half the number. From the movement of those I could see I felt certain they were about to charge, and I had scarcely reported this when they broke cover with yells and shrieks and dashed at the fort. The idea of the platform must have been an inspiration. But for it the fort would have been taken.

As the natives broke cover, the loopholes were manned and the rest of the force ordered on to the platform. Running ahead of the main line were thirty or forty men, each with a great stick in his hand. After them came as many more dragging rude ladders, the rungs of which were made of vines. At the very first dash, and without losing over three or four men, the fellows plugged up every loophole, and a minute later their ladders were set against the wall. Without orders, realizing the situation, the seventeen men at the loopholes made their way to the platform. Each of us had

over two feet of space to cover, making a long thin line. The natives swarmed up the ladders like so many monkeys, and though we had a great advantage in overtopping them, they showed such recklessness that we had four men killed and two wounded before we repulsed them. After emptying our muskets we used the bayonets alone, and some of our men killed seven or eight of the assailants. As they became demoralized and started to retreat we opened on them with the extra muskets, and when the last gun had been fired we counted one hundred and twenty-three dead men in sight. But for the platform they would have swarmed over the walls like so many bees.

Now the real siege began. Bodies of natives were stationed on every side of us within musket range, and a steady and harassing fire was maintained night and day. After the first two days artillery was employed. Although it was not heavy enough to break the walls, it answered the purpose for annoying us. Our killed we had to bury inside the fort, nor could we get outside to do anything with the Afghan dead. All lay upon about half an acre of ground, and so near us that after thirty-six hours we began to scent the taint in the air. It was the plan of the enemy to leave their dead here to work our destruction, and for a time it seemed as if success would attend it.

About noon, while rummaging in the underground storehouse, I came across a barrel of alcohol, which had been captured with some other baggage a month before. If the Afghans knew what it was, they had not touched it. In a case beside the barrel were quantities of quinine, morphine, calomel, and other drugs which our hospital corps had lost at the same time. When I reported the find to the lieutenant I also made a request of him, and after considerable argument it was granted. Night came on with a strong wind from the north and an overcast sky, and it was only fairly dark when I was let out of the gate with two pailfuls of the alcohol. The natives were firing away as usual, and as I walked down among the dead I heard the "zip!" of bullets all around me. I had a saturated cloth over my mouth and cotton in my nostrils, and I could stand the odor very well. There was considerable grass and brush on the field, and I distributed the alcohol pretty liberally over both the soil and the dead. It took four

trips to empty the barrel. It was then knocked to pieces and the material carried out. The last act was to light a match and set fire to a paper, and a minute later I was safe in the fort and the field of the dead was all ablaze. Before midnight we had wiped out the threatened danger, much to the chagrin and indignation of the natives. The relief came too late, however, for some of our poor fellows. Within the next three days we had five deaths, every one of them, no doubt, due to the pestilential odor; and the constant strain of watching had begun to tell upon all the living.

We had been afraid the natives would bring up a mortar and drop shells into the fort, but we had been besieged for three weeks before they got one into position. They opened fire one afternoon, but of ten shells sent into the air to drop down on our heads, all went wild. Then the mortar burst, killing all around it, and we were safe. On the fortieth day from the hour we entered the fort the natives made another dash at the walls. Our force was now reduced to thirty-one men, and four of those were down with fever and unable to raise their heads. We had warning of the dash and were prepared for it. Every man on the platform had three loaded muskets. We took thirteen loaded shells belonging to the gun, cut the fuses short, and laid them on the wall. Beside each was a piece of lighted punk. It was estimated that there were fully six hundred natives in the attacking party, and they carried about fifty ladders. The fight didn't last ten minutes. It was the shells we rolled down among 'em which did the work. I believe the dead and wounded were fully two hundred, but they could afford that loss better than the three we had killed outright.

The cool weather had now come, and on the night of the fight snow fell to the depth of six inches. For two days after not a shot was fired. Then, for the next twenty, we had no rest day or night. They did not attempt another assault, but coolly calculated to wear us out. A few more days would have accomplished this. On the seventy-first day of our investment we were relieved by a British force, but there were only eight men of us able to stand on our feet. In all, only twenty-two of us were alive. On the day of the relief fifty Afghans could have scaled the walls and taken the fort.

An heroic story of love and self-sacrifice that comes from the Rocky Mountains, by H. Elton Smith, in the Overland *Monthly*.

A HERO FROM THE NORTH.

It was hot. The sun was beating down upon the head of the unprotected earth, as if to gratify a never-ending enmity against his victim. The defenceless earth smoked and quivered, parched and cracked open in agony, and it refused sustenance to the vegetation that clung trustingly to it. The streams murmured in subdued tones, the crickets creaked a dismal refrain. The earth was conquered, and the remorseless sun triumphantly drove shaft after shaft upon his fallen foe.

It was a battle of giants into the presence of which no smaller creature should dare to venture. It was too hot for man. Yet, crawling between the earth and the sun, one adventurous mortal was braving the elemental fury. Slowly he toiled over the low rolling hills. No green thing in sight to rest the eyes from the glare of dried earth and grass; nothing to relieve save the hazy and uncertain outlines of the distant hills, that danced like a will-o'-the-wisp in the smoky atmosphere. The hot air scorched his nostrils as he inhaled it, and then came back from his lungs with increased heat; his face was dry and burned, and through the gaping pores no grateful moisture came. Yet on he strode with steady swinging pace.

He was indeed well calculated to withstand the buffets of the weather or the fiercer attacks of his fellow-men. More than six feet in height, his broad shoulders and well-proportioned figure made him seem much shorter, and his easy graceful movements showed a control of every muscle that could come only from constant and active exercise. A long, reddish-blonde beard covered his face, which was bronzed by exposure almost to the color of his beard, and his long hair fell in waves upon his shoulders. His whole appearance was striking, yet the most striking feature was his piercing blue eyes, which seemed to look you through and through, and announced plainly that their owner

could not shirk danger or hardship in whatever form it might come. His costume was that of a hunter and indicated—as did his small cap made of the skin of an animal even more strongly—that its purpose was to withstand a much colder climate than that which he was now experiencing. Upon his back was slung an old-fashioned muzzle-loading rifle.

Pausing on the crest of a small hill, he glanced around him toward the distant line of hills, and then turning his course in the course of their nearest point, he resumed his journey. He had gone but a short distance when he saw the first signs of life that had greeted him that day. As he passed over a slight rise in the ground he saw a large bull standing on the slope of the hill. The animal saw him at the same moment, and turning toward him stood looking at the intruder. Soon several more appeared, regarding him attentively, and then the whole band began moving slowly across his path, about one hundred yards in front of him. Pushing on his course, he paid no attention to them, until they again attracted his notice by the peculiarity of their actions. The whole band of about one hundred cattle were now in sight, and were circling around him with steadily increasing speed. It was evident that he was the object of their attention, and he attempted to frighten them away by shouting and waving his arms, but these efforts were without avail. On the contrary, the animals had drawn around him in a circle, and were now approaching nearer and nearer, drawing the circle tighter about him every moment.

He saw that it was impossible to break through their line, and yet to stand there and await their attack was certain death. Their long, sharp horns gleamed viciously in the sunlight. Glancing hastily around, he sought some tree or rock that might offer some shelter from their attack. But there was none within reach; nothing within that fatal circle to relieve the monotony of the shining, slippery grass. There was no time to be lost, for the circle was constantly growing smaller, and the animals becoming more and still more closely packed. Quick as thought he formed his plan of action. Unslinging his rifle, he prepared to shoot one of the animals in front of him, hoping in the confusion that would follow to break through the line and find shelter among some trees at the foot of the hill. Bringing the

rifle to his shoulder, he prepared to make his single shot as effective as possible.

"Do not shoot! Do not shoot."

The voice came from behind him, and he turned in surprise in that direction. His surprise was increased when he saw a horse approaching at full speed, and upon his back a young girl, whose long, black hair, loosened by her riding, was streaming out behind her, while she anxiously urged her horse onward. As he looked, her horse dashed into the circle and the nearest cattle were turned and headed down the hillside. With a dexterity that astonished him she "rounded up" the herd, and soon had them all started down the side of the hill after the leaders, and then halted her horse alongside of him.

The situation was an embarrassing one for him, and for once in his life he felt uncomfortable and ill at ease. To require assistance in getting out of a bad scrape was no new experience, but to have the whole matter taken out of his hands, and to be rescued from his peril while he stood idly by was unpleasant; to have this done by a woman was humiliating. He stood looking at her awkwardly, while she sat shyly returning his glance. Indeed, she felt as uncomfortable as he, though he was too confused to notice it. Finally, he recovered himself sufficiently to speak.

"I have to thank you," he said. "They would probably have killed me." There was no trace in his voice of the excitement of the situation from which he had just been rescued.

She looked at him curiously, for evidently his mode of address puzzled her.

"Where do you come from, señor?" she inquired at length.

The tone of uncertainty and the abruptness of the question discovered to him the fact of her embarrassment, and gave him that feeling of superiority that enabled him to regain his self-possession.

"From the Blue Mountains," he answered with a smile.

"The Blue Mountains?"

"Yes; you have not heard of them? They are far away to the north of here, many hundred miles. I have travelled alone for many months. Until now I have not seen a human being for weeks."

"But how did you know we lived here?"

"I did not know."

"Then why did you come?"

"I have travelled for pleasure, for curiosity. I wished to see this southern country, where the sun burns you up. I am a King George man. You do not understand? I hunt and kill game for the Hudson Bay Company. But I have left them behind."

"I do not understand," she said simply. "Where are you going?"

"I do not know. Anywhere. I am going now to those mountains," pointing to the distant line of hills.

"But you will first come with me? You must rest until it is cooler. Nobody travels here in the heat of the day; it would kill you. You must come and eat with us, and then we can give you a horse to continue your journey, and tell you how to go. To think of walking!"

"I thank you, no. I must go on."

"In the heat? You will die. You must come with me. The father and mother will welcome you. I wish you to come."

He looked at her closely for the first time, and then he wondered why he had not noticed her beauty before. She was dark, with that Spanish complexion through which the warm blood showed with a rich color, heightening the brilliancy of her lustrous black eyes, which lighted up her whole face with a tender, trusting expression. Her raven hair hung in masses upon her shoulders, and as she leaned forward with a confiding, entreating gesture, he thought he had never seen so beautiful a woman.

"I will come," he said briefly, and as she turned her horse in the direction of her home, he walked on by her side. So they journeyed in silence for a time.

"I must thank you for saving my life," he said at length. "They would surely have killed me, and you ran great risk yourself."

"If you had shot at them, I could not have turned them away," she answered. "They would have been angry. You should not have walked here: they do not attack one who rides, but when you walk they will kill you."

Before long they came in sight of the hacienda, a long, low adobe house, upon a flat with neither tree

nor shrub near, but upon one side the steep spurs of the range of hills came almost to the house, forming deep cañons.

The old folks received him kindly, listened gravely to the story of his adventure, and then showed him to an apartment in the house where he might rest until his meal was prepared. But he was in no mood to rest. The indolent Spanish customs suited him but ill, for he was unaccustomed to the heat of the weather and the habits that it necessitated. Besides, his mind was far from easy. He was of a quiet disposition naturally, and loved solitude. His long, weary journey from the settlements of the north had been undertaken mainly to satisfy his restless nature, and to carry him away from where he would be in the society of men. His impulse, even while prompted by gratitude to the girl for the service she had rendered him, was to retreat from the settlement, where he would again be thrown into intercourse with his fellow-men. But she exercised a strange fascination over him, and though he would not confess it even to himself, it was to be near her, to feast his eyes upon her beauty, that he had accepted her invitation.

It was with a pleasing fiction by which he only half deceived himself, therefore, that he now sought the low veranda in front of the house, "to enjoy the fresh air outside."

"Josefa is preparing a little supper for you," explained the old man, as he sat puffing a cigarette.

The stranger seated himself near the door, where he might see the lithe, slender figure of the girl as she flitted about inside, produced a pipe after having refused a proffered cigarette, and was soon entertaining the old man with stories of his adventures among Indians and wild beasts. The Mexican listened gravely, only half understanding the allusions of his guest to unfamiliar localities and customs, yet refraining from asking questions, lest he might seem inquisitive about the visitor's antecedents.

Soon Josefa, having finished her preparations inside, came and stood by her father, and the stranger found fresh enthusiasm for his narrative in her evident admiring interest.

The afternoon shadows lengthened imperceptibly as he continued his reminiscences, and the sun was almost

disappearing behind the distant hills when they sat down for the meal which Josefa had prepared some hours before. He became more and more interested in the girl, and it required but little pressing to persuade him to stay with them that night. The next day he was even more reluctant to leave, and they seemed equally loath to have him, and so his stay was extended two or three days.

One evening, as he stood with Josefa, talking of anything so that he might have the pleasure of her company, and wondering whether the moon ever shone so brightly or so beautifully before, she suddenly said to him, "Manuel is coming home to-morrow."

"Manuel! Who is Manuel?"

"Ah, you do not know him," she said. Then after a pause, as if reluctant, yet anxious to tell her secret, she added, "We are to be married; he is my lover, and I shall marry him next week. Oh, you should see Manuel! so handsome! not handsome like you are, but like a Spaniard. You must stay and see Manuel; I would show him the big, strong man I saved."

"It would no doubt entertain him." It was the tone rather than what he said that arrested her attention.

"Ah, I have hurt you now," she said, laying her hand gently on his arm as he turned away. "Forgive me; it was but a joke I intended. You are so good and strong I did not think."

"Forgive you, little woman? You could not offend me; I would give my life to make you happy." Then, as she looked at him in surprise at the earnest intensity of his speech, he added, "Have you not saved my life? And so you see it belongs to you. And you love Manuel very much?"

"Why yes! Are we not to be married?".

"Then I am glad that you will be happy."

"And you will stay and see Manuel?"

"Yes. I will stay. Now I want to be alone," he added abruptly, and she turned into the house murmuring to herself, "He is so strange. I cannot understand. He is different, that's what it is; he is different." And with this somewhat obscure explanation she was content.

But with the visitor it was far otherwise. As she disappeared from his view he strode out in the moonlight, and paced up and down with quick, nervous stride.

The bright moon cast a flood of silver light over the scene, but somehow the beauty seemed to have departed from it forever. A gentle breeze fanned his brow, but he was too agitated to feel its soothing effect.

"I might have known it," he muttered. "What am I, that I should hope to win such a prize? A wanderer, an outcast from my fellow-men, without a home that I might offer her. Fool, fool that I was to have stayed here, when I might have known that she would have some lover among her own people. But what right has he to interfere? Stay to see him? Yes, I shall stay, and I shall kill him."

The spark of disappointed love had fired all his passionate nature, and the angry flames were darting forth, consuming all sense of right and justice. He strode rapidly up and down, as if he would seek relief from his torture in bodily exhaustion. Suddenly he stopped short.

"Bah!" he exclaimed. "A fine thing this, for a man like me to give up this way. To think that a gentle, timid creature like that should make me mad with pain! I have but to say 'It is over,' and I shall suffer no more."

But his will was weaker than his philosophy, and as he turned toward the house something very like a sob escaped him. He retired, weak and trembling after his struggle with himself, but it was not to sleep. He was more calm, for his capacity for suffering had exhausted itself, and there was nothing but a dull feeling of despair.

He tossed about in a troubled, feverish sleep until daylight, and then rose and strode out into the open air. The atmosphere of the house seemed to stifle him; his old restless longing for an active life was upon him again, and he must be moving. "If I had not promised her to see this man," he murmured, "I would go now, and be among the mountains once more. Nature is the only thing that's true, after all. Yet why should I wait to see him? She would be disappointed and unhappy, but am I not unhappy? I shall go."

Nevertheless, in spite of his determination, he lingered on through the day, and into the afternoon. The day was hotter than any he had ever experienced, but he did not mind the weather. The atmosphere became more smoky, until the sun shone through it with

a lurid glare. Even the Spaniards felt prostrated by the unusual heat, and Josefa glanced anxiously toward the mouth of the cañon through which the trail wound by which Manuel was to return. He had gone across the mountains with a herd of cattle, his only companion being a Mexican vaquero, and he had been expected to reach home that morning, but still he did not come.

Suddenly a low, distant rumbling was heard, and a sound as of a strong wind blowing through the trees. The rumbling increased in volume, and the earth began to sway with a sharp, quick motion, that seemed to increase in force with each movement.

Josefa, springing forward with blanched cheeks, exclaimed: "And Manuel is in the cañon! He will be killed! he will be killed!"

The few horses that were near the house were running wildly to and fro, and the cattle were bellowing, adding to the confusion of the moment. Josefa rushed forward, and securing her favorite horse was on his back and speeding toward the cañon in a moment, despite his nervous and excited condition. The trapper rose and followed her as fast as he could, and as the trail in the cañon was difficult for the horse, owing to the loosened bowlders that had lodged across it and broken it away in places, he overtook her before she had gone far.

"You must not come here," he cried. "The earthquake has loosened these bowlders and has cracked the trail, so that it may give way with you at any moment. Go back, and if Manuel is in the cañon I will find him and bring him safely to you."

"No, I must come," she said briefly, and on they went up the trail. They had not gone far when they came upon the object of their search. Manuel was lying in the trail, beneath an immense bowlder, which, wedged between the bank and a small tree on the outer edge of the trail, rested upon his legs so that he could not move, though his arms and body were free.

Although he was not badly hurt, his position was a precarious one, for the bowlder in striking the tree had loosened the roots, and the whole trail at that point was likely to give way at any moment, plunging him a thousand feet down the precipice.

Keeping Josefa back from the dangerous point, he

examined the situation thoroughly, and then shook his head gravely.

"There is but one way," he muttered to himself, "and any way it will pay my debt. A life for a life is fair turnabout." Then addressing Manuel, he said: "When I tell you, push upward with your hand on the bowlder, and crowd yourself as close to the inner wall as you can. Do you understand?"

"Yes," answered Manuel.

Stepping carefully over the crumbled earth he caught the small tree, and picked his way out until he stood over the precipice.

"Now push with all your might," he cried, and giving himself a violent swing outward he threw all his weight upon the tree. It trembled a moment, and then the roots tore themselves loose, and tree, bowlder, and man went crashing down the precipice.

Josefa, who had gone back around a bend in the trail, heard the crash, and, stepping forward, saw Manuel lying upon the edge of the trail, released from the bowlder but still lying upon the crumbling earth.

With a glad cry she rushed forward and helped him out of his peril. Then she looked around for his preserver. He was nowhere to be seen.

"Ah, he has gone," she said. "He said he would go when you came, and he has run away from us. But I have you now, Manuel, and I am so happy." Then with a little shudder, as she looked over the edge of the trail at the seemingly bottomless abyss, "Suppose you had gone over there, Manuel. It would have been horrible!"

If you like heroic women, you will be pardoned for loving this one, who lives in a story from *Temple Bar*

THE SIEGE OF SUNDA GUNGE.

I.

On the 1st of July, 1857, the Indian mutiny was at its height. For ten days the little British station at Sunda Gunge had been besieged by the insurgent Sepoys.

The station was divided into two portions—the lower, consisting of the Indian village, and the upper, part of which, including the magazine and the British residency, was strongly fortified. Within this portion the English residents had retired on the first signal of approaching danger. The rebels fortunately possessed only one small piece of cannon, which had proved quite ineffectual against the walls of the inclosure. Provisions were not scarce; and up to the present moment the garrison had entertained strong hopes of being able to hold out until relief arrived.

Suddenly a new and unexpected danger had arisen.

The buildings inclosed within the fortifications formed an open square. In the middle of the square was the well which supplied the garrison with water. About five o'clock in the afternoon a group of several persons were standing within the shelter of an archway which opened into the square, and gazing with looks of consternation and dismay in the direction of the well.

The cause of their alarm was singular.

The town was situated at the foot of a range of hills; and from one particular point upon the slopes outside the walls the well in the middle of the square was visible. This the Sepoys had at length discovered. Their single piece of cannon was at once posted at this point, and brought to bear exactly on the well within the town. The result of this proceeding is self-evident. If one of the garrison should now venture into the square for the purpose of fetching water he would run an imminent risk of being blown to atoms by a volley of grape-shot.

The group of spectators looked in silence at the well. The same thought occupied the minds of all. There were women in the garrison—delicate English

ladies, girls, and children—and within the rooms set apart for the purpose of a hospital wounded men were moaning for water. Water, at all costs, must be had—even in the face of a vigilant enemy and a loaded cannon. But how?

Over a fringe of mango trees and the roofs of some low bungalows to the right of the square, a knot of dusky figures could be descried at a certain point on the hillside. The dark point marked the spot where the cannon was posted. Even as the spectators looked toward it the cannon boomed—there came a puff of smoke and a flash of fire—and at the same moment the ground about the mouth of the well was torn up by a fierce hail of shot. The gunners were trying their range; and what is more, it was only too evident that they had found it.

The spectators looked significantly at one another. Four of the group were English soldiers; the rest were natives. Of the latter, two were water carriers, each of whom carried about his waist a large, hollow belt of skin, capable of containing several gallons of water. The duty of these men was, in ordinary times, one of no particular danger. But now the case was altered. There they stood trembling, their dusky faces turning to a sickly yellow, as they stared at the space of shattered ground which the storm of shot had torn up all round the mouth of the well. The other natives were all Sikhs; and these, with the impassive courage of their race, looked on calmly and betrayed no emotion.

Of the Englishmen, two were private soldiers; the other two were officers—Colonel Dundas, the officer in charge of the garrison, and a young lieutenant, St. George Vane. The colonel was a tall, gray-haired man, grave, stern, and martial. The lieutenant was a young man of not more than five or six and twenty, with blue eyes, fair mustache, and careless, handsome features, much bronzed by exposure to the sun.

The colonel was the first to speak.

"This is an awkward business, Vane," he said. "We might drive these cowards to the well, but they will certainly be blown to pieces, and we shall get no water. And at night, with this moon, it is as light as day. One could see a mouse stirring."

"True," said Vane, reflecting, "yet—stay! one of us might go out alone and try to bring in water. If they

hit him, as they most likely will, three or four others can be ready to rush out and bring him in, and the water as well, before they have time to load again," and he looked inquiringly at the colonel's face, eager to learn what he thought of the proposal.

"The cannon is not the only danger," said the colonel. "They have rifles."

"Yes," said Vane, "but a rifle at that range would most likely miss —a shower of grape is different."

The colonel hesitated. No commander likes to send brave men on desperate ventures. But he could see no other scheme which would not involve much greater risk of life, with still less prospect of success. And they must reach the well in some way—the necessity was vital. If once their supply of water were cut off their chance was gone. They could not last twelve hours.

Vane had kept his eyes fixed upon the colonel's face.

"Let me try," he said eagerly. "Give me a few men —a score will volunteer—and we will laugh at these black scoundrels yet."

The colonel hesitated—but only for a moment. There was no man in the garrison whom he valued and trusted more than St. George Vane. He knew well the danger of the proposed adventure; and he knew well, also, that Vane, if he were allowed to undertake it, would never rest until his task succeeded or he himself were killed in the attempt. But in warfare private feeling must give way to the general good. After a moment the colonel laid his hand on the young man's shoulder and said briefly:

"Try!"

II.

An hour or two later Vane entered his own room.

It was a large apartment, situated at the back of the walled inclosure, which, on account of its size, had come to be used by the officers as a common room. Its windows opened on a wide veranda, which extended the whole length of the building, having the windows also opening upon it. The largest of these rooms had been set apart for the use of the ladies of the garrison, and as the veranda was cool, shady, and retired, they were often accustomed to sit there, in preference to breathing the close heat of the room within.

At the moment when Vane entered two figures were

sitting on the veranda, not far from his own window—two girls. One of these was a tall, slight girl, pale and light-haired—not handsome, nor even remarkable, except for her eyes, which were large, gray, serious, and when at rest, deep rather than bright. Her companion, on the other hand, was a girl of singular beauty; a girl with dark hair, dark eyes, rather full red lips, and skin of soft and flower-like bloom. The name of the pale girl was Mary Sulland; that of the beautiful one was Lenora Dundas. The latter was the colonel's daughter; Mary Sulland was his ward. Before the mutiny they had lived together with an old English servant, Mrs. Jessop, in the colonel's bungalow, outside the fortified inclosure.

The characters of these two girls we will leave to reveal themselves as we proceed; only recording the relations in which they stood to St. George Vane, who had known them both since they were children.

Like all men of her acquaintance, Vane admired Lenora greatly and sometimes half believed himself in love with her; and whether he was really so or not, he had been accustomed for years to call himself her worshipper. On the other hand, though he liked Mary Sulland very warmly and would have done anything in his power to give her pleasure, he never told himself that he was in love with her, nor even thought about it.

Both the girls on their side regarded Vane with feelings far different from those of ordinary interest. But it is characteristic of each, that while Lenora never forgot that Vane was a rich man, Mary Sulland never gave the fact a thought, nor would have considered the subject of much interest if she had.

The girls were now alone on the veranda, anxious, restless, and uneasy. It is true that at that moment nothing alarming was either to be seen or heard. No noise of war was in the air; scarcely a sound disturbed the evening silence. In the earlier days of the siege there had been continued assaults upon the walls, but these had now been given up as hopeless, and except for the distant humming of the human swarms among the huts and bazaars of the Sepoys around the walls, the place was still. But "over all there hung a cloud of fear;" a sense of impending danger, as of the sword hanging by a single thread; the cruel uncertainty as to what was going to happen, which makes the peculiar horror of a passive siege. In such a situation the ear

is always listening, the nerves are ready to start at every sound, and the mind is kept stretched constantly upon the rack.

Vane, on entering the room, had no knowledge that the two girls were at that moment on the veranda, so near to his own window. He had just been round the station, and had got together with some difficulty half a dozen men who could be spared from active duty at the watch posts on the walls, and these, as he had given orders, were now collected about the door of the room, awaiting his arrival. Four were English, two were Sikhs—every man of them, as Vane knew well, to be trusted to the death.

These men he now placed on one side of the table, while he himself stood on the other. Then, in a few words, he explained to them the nature of the service for which they were required, adding that he only wished for volunteers, and that any man who disliked the duty might retire at once. Not a man stirred, however. The Sikhs saluted gravely; the British soldiers, true to immemorial custom of their race when called upon to face a special danger, broke into a cheer.

Vane looked round him and his eyes glistened, but he said simply:

"The man that goes out first will run by far the greatest risk. Who will undertake that duty?"

There were, as already stated, six men present besides Vane himself. Six right hands immediately saluted—there were six competitors for the privilege of being the first mark of the Sepoys' cannon. Vane smiled.

"We must draw lots, I see," he said.

Opening a shallow drawer in the table he took out of it a pack of cards.

"Here are seven of us," he continued. "I am going to deal these cards all round. Whichever of us receives a certain card—we will say the knave of spades—will be the man selected."

He cut the pack. The deal began.

A hush fell on the six spectators—the hush of rising interest. Except for the slight fluttering noise made by the falling cards, not a sound was to be heard. Strange that there is something in suspense which affects the mind more strongly than the actual danger. These men had volunteered, without a space of hesitation, to face the risk of death. Yet not one of them

could now look on without a tingling of the blood as they waited for the card to fall which carried an's life! Such was their absorption that they did not see two faces which came suddenly peeping in upon them through the window of the room.

The girls on the veranda had been startled by hearing all at once the sound of voices in the room close by them. From their position they could not avoid overhearing every word that passed. They heard the short speech in which Vane announced to the men the danger which threatened the well and the duty which was expected of them; they heard his appeal for volunteers and then the cheer which followed. So far they had remained motionless, eagerly drinking in the details of the proposed adventure; but when Vane took out the pack of cards in order to select a man by lot, to listen, without seeing, was impossible—and in a minute the two faces came peeping in at the window, in the manner just described.

From this position they could see clearly every card as it was dealt. The cards fell slowly, one by one, before each man in turn. The deal went round—card by card, as it appeared, the focus of nine pairs of eager eyes. The second deal went round—no knave of spades as yet appeared. The fourth began; would that complete the circuit of the seven? The pack was growing thin, and expectation deepened now with every card. Where was the knave of spades? It must come soon! Again the cards went round.

No! Not quite. As the last card fell face upward on the table, a thrill went through the nerves of the spectators. The two girls at the window shrank back suddenly as if they had been shot. There was the fatal card at last! The lot had fallen to Vane himself.

The young man laughed lightly as he threw down the pack.

"That decides it," he said. "I go first. You will met me at the archway in half an hour from this time; it then will be dusk, and we will give ourselves what chance we can. I shall go out alone; the rest of you will wait under cover of the archway and will rush out the moment they fire at me. If I fall, two of you must bring me in—Sanderson and King can do it. The other four must try to get a bucketful of water each—there will be time for that, I think, though it will be

sharp work. Remember, at the archway, with all ready, in half an hour."

III.

The men saluted and filed out. Vane was left alone. He turned, and was about to seat himself at the table, when, to his surprise, he saw a figure standing in the window of the room. He looked again and saw that it was Lenora. What could have brought her there he knew not; the truth he did not guess. Wondering, he took a step or two in her direction, and was about to ask her what she wished, when she came hurriedly forward and stood beside him.

"St. George," she said, "you must not go—you shall not go. Tell me you will not; promise me."

As she spoke, he thought, for the first time, of the veranda; she knew what he was going to do. He would much rather that she had not known; but he answered simply: "It is my duty, Lenora."

"Duty!" she repeated with impatience. "Oh, yes —but do not go! Send some one else; surely there are plenty of men. Do not go, St. George." She laid her hand upon the young man's arm and looked up into his eyes.

Great is the power of beauty—though it be the beauty of Delilah. It could not make a man like Vane forgetful of his duty, or shake for more than a moment his natural resolution. But as he looked down at the lovely lips which tempted him, he did not turn at once away. And yet her words jarred on him. He felt no surprise; he knew Lenora well; but he would have chosen that the girl to whom he gave his love, though she might part from him in agony of mind, would not have had him shirk his duty in the face of danger. Love might be dearer to her than life, but honor should be dearer than either.

He was on the point of speaking, when there appeared at the window of the room another figure. They both looked up and saw it. It was Mary Sulland. Her face was very pale, and as she came forward a close observer might have seen that she was trembling. But her eyes shone with a strange light, and when she spoke, her voice, though low, was thrilling in its distinctness. Her first words showed that she had not

overheard, or had not understood, what had already passed between Lenora and St. George.

"We know where you are going," she said, with shining eyes. "Lenora shall not be alone in bidding you Godspeed before you go. I have come to do so, too;" and, as she spoke, she looked as a Spartan maiden may have looked when she sent her lover forth to death or glory.

At the first sound of her voice Vane started. Their eyes met, and one might have thought that some reflection of the light in hers had flashed into his own. Without a word he took her hand and pressed it to his lips. Then, with the same action of farewell to Lenora, he turned away, reached the door of the apartment, and was gone.

The whole scene was over almost in a moment. Yet scenes as brief have often been the turning-point of lives—and so it was to be with these.

IV.

Lenora, with a half-hysterical laugh, turned to the window and went out. Mary Sulland was left alone. Suddenly she sank upon a chair, and burst into such a passion of tears as shook her very frame.

It is not in the nature of any woman, however nobly made, however jealous of the honor of the man whom she regards, not to feel at such a moment a cruel agony of mind. She was alone. The excitement which had sustained her was already over; and now the hard, plain fact, without disguise, pressed itself remorselessly upon her soul. Her hero had gone forth to almost certain death.

Her hero? Yes—he was her hero. She made no secret of it now in her own heart. She loved him well. Gladly would she have given her own life for his. But alas! what could she do?

All at once a wild thought struck her. Her cheek flamed; the old light kindled in her eyes. She started to her feet, pale, eager-eyed, and trembling—trembling now with new excitement. She seemed like one possessed by a spirit stronger than her own—by an impulse overmastering and resistless. For a moment or two she stood motionless, her eyes gleaming. Then turning, not to the window, but to the door, she hurried from the room.

She went straight to her own chamber. In a few minutes she came out again. She was now draped in a long, close, gray dressing-gown, which completely covered her own dress. Her tall, slight figure, thus garmented, looked like nothing so much as a gray ghost —and like a ghost in the falling light of evening she glided out of her chamber, and passed along the passages and down a flight of stairs.

All at once she stopped. Some noise alarmed her. And now she was afraid—afraid not of what she was about to do, but of being seen and thwarted in the execution of her plan. Presently, all being still, she again stole forward. The men were, for the most part, busy at their posts about the fortifications, and the part of the station through which she had to pass was almost deserted. Fortune favored her, besides; no eye observed her as she stole upon her way.

At last, to her infinite relief, she reached her destination. She stood in the archway which led out into the square.

It was still empty. Vane's volunteers had gone in search of the articles required for the adventure, and had not yet arrived. The open court was before her; and there, in the middle of it, was the well.

She knew the archway well—its image had been clear to her mind's eye all along. It was a kind of tunnel, or covered passage, of brickwork, some half a dozen yards in length. Near the outer end of the archway there was a buttress, and beyond it a recess or deep niche in the masonry. The niche was close beside the buttress, on the side toward the square.

The gray figure reached the buttress—glided into the recess—and disappeared.

V.

Five minutes passed—ten minutes. Then the sound of steps was heard, and men entered the archway in a body. Vane was not among them; but immediately afterward he appeared, together with another officer—the surgeon.

By this time the sun had sunk, and but for the rising moon it would have been quite dark. As it was, the interior of the archway was in gloom; but the open square outside was bathed in light—a light uncertain, shadowy, spectral, yet permitting any object moving

in it to be distinctly seen. The woodwork which had supported the windlass of the well had been shattered by the shot and now stood in ruins; but the chain remained intact, its end twisted round a broken stump, and the bucket hung in safety inside the opening of the well.

No time was lost. Vane spoke a word or two, by way of last directions to the men; then taking a bucket in his hand, so that, if by any chance he escaped the shot, he might do his share in bringing in the water, he turned toward the square. That his chance was very slight he knew. And as he turned to go forth into the range of the cannon, his face, though resolute, was grave.

He had already taken a step or two in advance, when he suddenly stopped short. What was that? A soft, gray, ghostly figure started out of the wall in front of him and flitted forth into the open air. Before he had recovered from his amazement, it had already reached the well. For the space of an instant it stood there, motionless; then, as if desiring rather to attract attention than to shun it, it raised both arms above its head and waved them in the moonlight. In a moment—just as Vane, recovering a little, started out of the archway—the cannon thundered; a storm of shot whistled in the air, ploughed up the ground, and rattled among the ruined woodwork of the well.

Vane was still outside of its range, and no shot struck him. But the phantom figure—what of it? He looked; and thrilled. What dark thing was that which now lay motionless beside the mouth of the well? He had not seen the figure fall—but it was down upon the ground!

VI.

A little after noon the next day the garrison of Sunda Gunge was shaken suddenly by strange excitement. First, there became audible a noise of wild confusion in the encampment of the Sepoys round the walls. It grew—it gathered volume; it swelled into a tumult. Guns fired; voices yelled; a sound was heard as of the stampede of innumerable feet. Then, drowning every other sound, arose the loud hurrahing of English voices; and this, taken up by those inside the garrison, became in a few minutes a perfect tempest of wild cheering, ringing far and near.

Suddenly — unexpectedly — relief had come. The rebels were flying in all directions; their camp was in the hands of English soldiers. The siege of Sunda Gunge was over.

As soon as the fact of the relief was certain, Vane stepped out of the crowd and made his way, alone and unperceived, along the deserted passages to a certain room which lay in the rear of the walled buildings. It was the very room from which the night before a slender, gray-draped figure had stolen softly out.

Just as he reached the door and was hesitating at the threshold, Mrs. Jessop, who had been called out by the noise of the cheering, was seen returning in a state of much excitement. Vane accosted her eagerly, but in low tones. "Is she better? Can I see her yet?" he asked.

"She is much better; she is dressed and sitting up. But the noise alarmed her. She does not know the cause of it. Will you come in and tell her?"

Vane followed her into the room. In a large chair, next the window, looking very white and weak, with a bandage round her temples, where the shot had grazed and stunned her, sat Mary Sulland. As Vane entered she looked round. He paused, and for some seconds the two looked at each other.

He had not seen her since, the night before, he had carried her, swooning, to her room. He had heard, with infinite relief, that the wound was not serious; and inquiring hourly at the door throughout the night, he had learned that the swoon was passing off, and that with some hours of rest there would be little to be feared. Yet now, as he stood before her, even the great event which had just happened was less present to his mind than anxiety to satisfy himself, with his own eyes, that she was safe. The shock which he had felt at the moment when he had raised her in his arms and caught sight of her white face in the moonlight was with him still. He had felt at that instant a certainty that she was killed.

And indeed she had had a wonderful escape.

Every sportsman who has tried his gun at a sheet of blank paper knows that it will sometimes happen that, while the paper will be spotted thick with pellets, there will sometimes be a space left free of shot large enough, perhaps, to have let the game escape, however true the

aim. It had so happened here. Amid the storm of shot only one had grazed her; the rest had whistled past her without harm. But where her slender figure had so narrowly escaped, a man, being of larger bulk, would inevitably have been struck down. Mary Sulland had, in fact, been slightly wounded, where Vane would have been killed.

During the hours of night, while he had wandered up and down outside her door, too restless to seek for sleep, he had thought of all these things. He had thought of the girl who had risked her life for his; he had let his memory go back into the past, and call to mind all that he had owed to Mary Sulland through the years that he had known her; how all his noblest aspirations, dreams, ambitions, had come from her, or had been fostered and strengthened by her sympathy; and he had wondered how it was that he himself had never realized till now what she had been to him. And now, as he stood beside her, as he looked at her again, he wondered more and more.

The look of inquiry on her face recalled him to himself.

"I am forgetting," he said. "I am glad to be the first to bring you the good news. I see you guess it. Yes, relief has come. The siege is over."

She looked at him with eagerness. One thought filled her mind—it forced a passage to her lips.

"Then you will not have to go again for water?"

As the words escaped her she flushed red. Her action of the night before had hardly been her own—so overmastering had been the impulse which had hurried her away. And now, like a woman, she was troubled by a doubt—what would he think of her? Had she, in thrusting herself between him and danger, forfeited forever his esteem? How could she expect that he would understand?

He did understand, however—at least partly. He saw that she was troubled, and he took the best course possible to set her at her ease. He meant to regard what she had done as a matter which, between themselves, required no explanation. As for others, they knew nothing. Except that she had been slightly hurt by a stray piece of shot, no one, not even the colonel or Lenora, knew the truth. The men who had been at the archway had only the vaguest idea of what had passed. The secret was their own.

"No," he said, smiling, "I shall not have to go again. Nor, what is of much greater consequence, will you, Mary."

She answered with a smile. They understood each other. He was bending over her; she was looking up at him. Mrs. Jessop was not near them, and it was almost as if they were alone. From the distance came a noise of voices cheering as if they never meant to stop; but in the room itself there was no sound but their own murmured talk.

"As soon as you are well again," he said, "I shall be very angry with you, Mary. I had a chance of getting the Victoria Cross, but now they will let you have it, I suppose."

She laughed softly, for his words were music to her. But it was not his words alone that thrilled her blood. She had won a richer prize than the Victoria Cross, and now she knew it. For in his eyes, as she looked up at them, she saw the flame of love.

A brave story of Indian warfare—if you like heroic deeds—is this, by Wm. K. Robertson in the Kansas City *Times*.

THE DISPATCH-BEARER.

THE sun shone so fiercely hot on the 17th of August, 187–, that the leaves of the trees folded themselves in humble protest and the birds crept pantingly under the shade of the brushwood which lined the banks of Otter Creek in their endeavor to screen themselves from the fiery orb. But the heat seemingly had no effect upon a man who stood upon an overturned wagon which formed part of some breastwork that had been upreared upon a knoll about five hundred yards from the creek. He was shading his eyes with his hand as he looked earnestly along a trail which ran away to the southeast.

"No signs of the troops yet," he muttered, as he rubbed his weary eyes; "good heavens! another day like this and then——"

Bang! zip! rang out the report of a rifle, and a bullet buried itself in the wagon bed.

"A miss is as good as a mile, my beauties," said the soldier, for such his dress showed him to be, "though," he added after a moment's consideration, "I'd prefer the mile!"

Instantly from the hills that lay about half a mile to westward of the creek came the report of many rifles, and a shower of bullets whistled unpleasantly close to the foolhardy soldier, who now, yielding to the entreaties of his comrades, slowly descended from the breastwork and entered the corral. Inside the corral a harrowing sight met his eyes. In a pit behind the hastily thrown up parapet lay a number of wounded men vainly calling for "water, water," the murmuring of which they could almost hear as they lay there, suffering from the agony of thirst augmented by the pain of their wounds. Their faces were pale and wan, their lips were cracked and dry, and as the sweltering sun beat upon their dying forms they moved their heads uneasily from side to side, moaning feebly, "water, water!" It was truly a heart-rending scene.

So thought old Jones, the soldier who had just descended from the look-out; for striding over to where the commanding officer stood he requested Colonel

Mack to allow him to go to the creek and obtain some water for the wounded.

"Do you know that you will almost certainly sacrifice your life in so doing?" said the colonel, for the approach to the creek was swept by the enemy's fire.

"Why, sir, I allow that thar is a risk; but, sir, they're sufferin' awful," Jones returned, jerking his thumb over his shoulder to indicate what he meant by "they."

"Well, then, since you will go, my brave fellow, may God protect you!" the stern old soldier returned, his gray eyes suffused with tears as he witnessed this touching trait of true heroism in the private.

Catching up a couple of buckets, Jones clambered over the breastwork and walked toward the creek as cool and self-possessed as if he were crossing a parade-ground. As the enemy's bullets ploughed up the ground in front and rear of him the hearts of his comrades stood still. They held their breath and grasped more tightly their carbines as they watched the progress of this daring soldier who was willing to lay down his life if by so doing a few wounded comrades might be benefited. Reaching the creek he filled his buckets and returned. When about half-way to the camp he stopped and rested himself, calmly directing his gaze toward the enemy's lines, who, seemingly astonished by his coolness, withheld their fire and allowed him to pass unmolested.

So the day wore on. Twice the Indians had striven to carry the camp and twice had they been repulsed. But Colonel Mack knew full well that he could not possibly hold out another day; his garrison was becoming weaker, his ammunition and rations were running low, and the Indians, having received a reinforcement, were becoming bolder. The latter, also, taking advantage of the many wash-outs which lay between the hills and the camp, had approached to within four hundred yards and were subjecting it to a most galling fire, some of the bullets even finding their way into the pit where the wounded lay.

"Some one must go and find the general," he muttered. "And yet I do not care to detail a man upon this dangerous service. I'll ask for a volunteer, and then it will be hard to decide among so gallant a command," and a smile of pride curled up the corners of his mouth, for the colonel thought—justly, perhaps—

that no body of men could equal his. So resolving, he walked over to where the men were receiving their rations of one cracker and a small slice of raw bacon.

"My lads," began the colonel, in his usual quiet tone, "it is necessary that I should tell you the state of affairs. Our rations and ammunition cannot last us another twenty-four hours. If relief does not come before nine o'clock to-night it will be imperative for some one to break through the enemy's lines and try to reach the general, who I believe is encamped somewhere on Cache Creek. Now, I want a volunteer. Who'll go?" And as he finished, for an instant a stillness fell upon the men, but was almost immediately broken by a shrill, boyish voice, followed by the deep bass of old Jack Jones.

"I'll go, colonel," they chorused. Here, again, the owner of the falsetto voice spoke up: "Let me go, colonel; Jones has a family; I hain't," he concluded, as he rose to his feet and revealed the lithe, slender form of Willie Scott, the trumpeter and life of —— troop.

"But, sir," broke in Jones, "he is only a boy. Let me go, colonel."

"But, sir," again interrupted the boy, with what he thought an all-convincing argument, "I spoke first."

The colonel gazed at the two a little, the one a gray-haired, bronzed-faced veteran, the other with his blue eyes wild with excitement and an eager expression on his face that seemed to say, "I'll get there, never fear." So it was that the colonel decided upon the latter.

"Come to me at half-past eight, boy," he said, and turning to old Jones he whispered, "Your chance may come yet, my brave fellow."

"I hope so," replied the old soldier, and, walking away from the spot, Jones threw himself down by an upturned wagon utterly inconsolable.

* * * * * *

It was a dark, hot, oppressive night. Not a star could be seen; the black, heavy clouds stretched themselves like a pall over the camp as the trumpeter, leading his horse, passed through an opening in the breastwork and set out upon his perilous ride.

"Mind and write to my mother, Pete, if I don't get through," he whispered to his comrade as he passed out.

"Never fear, Bunkie, but"—and here his comrade's voice grew a little husky—"for God's sake get through."

"I'll try," was the response, as they squeezed each other's hand and parted.

Soon the watchers in the camp lost sight of the boy. The sound of his horse's hoofs grew fainter and fainter, and then died away, but still they leaned over the breastwork, straining their eyes in the darkness as they tried to catch a glimpse of their young hero.

Nearer and nearer the trumpeter approached the Indian sentinels. Sometimes he would stop, listening intently, then move on, only to stop again and press his hand over his horse's mouth when he fancied he heard a noise. Suddenly a confused babel broke out upon his right and a lurid glare shot skyward. Upon the brow of a hill scarcely a mile away he saw the Indian band dancing and yelling around a fire like a horde of demons. Creeping further away into the gloom he murmured as he mounted, "O God! give me time." Then he rode forward.

On the top of the hill which he was now ascending an Indian sentinel crouched upon the ground listening to the approach of the boy. The night was so dark that he could not make out the rider until the latter was almost upon him, when quickly firing his piece he uttered a war-whoop that sounded clear across the plain, sending dismay into the hearts of the troopers below.

With a fierce exclamation the trumpeter drove his spurs into his horse's flanks, and discharging his revolver at the Indian rode madly forward. Pressing his knees well into his horse's sides, with his reins firmly held in hand, he dashed down the hill, closely pursued by the Indians, who, upon the report of the fire-arm, had instantly flung themselves upon their ponies and started in the chase.

Now began this race for life. Never was a steeplechase harder ridden. Away they flew over hill and through divide, their horses snorting and panting with the violence of the exercise; over the rocky beds of dried-up rivulets, through clumps of scrub oak, the young trumpeter now pulling up so abruptly as almost to unseat himself as in the darkness he nearly dashed against a tree; then leaping over the fallen timber that lay across his path and spluttering through the mudholes in which his horse sank to the girth. Still he pressed on, while the enemy came thundering in the rear, making the night resound with their war-whoops

and dropping an occasional shot whenever they thought it would tell. A stern chase is proverbially a long one, and undoubtedly it would have proved so in this case had not the boy's horse in crossing a piece of rough ground stumbled. He would have fallen had not he been instantly checked up. By this accident the Indians were enabled to gain some distance, when they opened fire with a surer aim.

Bang! bang! and the bullets whistled uncomfortably close to our young hero's ear.

Spurring his animal he sought to get out of range, and nobly did his faithful friend respond. Bang! bang! the guns rang out again, and the boy felt a stinging sensation in his left shoulder, his bridle arm falling useless by his side. The agony of the wound was intense, the motion of the horse rendering it more so, but still he retained his seat, knowing that upon his ability to get through rested the salvation of a hundred lives. Bearing now a little to the southeast, he struck the trail and furiously dashed along it. The sound of his pursuers grew fainter, then ceased, but he did not seem to hear, for a strange dizziness came over him, and he swayed in his saddle like a drunken man. Clutching at the pommel, he murmured as he thought the night grew darker, "O God, let me live an hour, only an hour!"

So the night sped on. Sometimes the horse would relapse into a trot and anon resume his swinging lope.

"Oh! that morning would come; that night would fold up its funeral garment and the glad sunshine smile upon the earth once more!"

How cold the night seemed to the boy hero as he, half-fainting, sat in the saddle with his head upon his breast and the warm blood trickling from his wound.

Would Cache never appear?

But just as the rosy fingers of the morn crept up from the east, he saw with his dying eyes the long black shadow of the timber that studded the banks of the creek, and as his weary comrade uttered a joyful neigh, a bugle-call rang out upon the morning air, the sound of which brightened up the boy's face.

The sound of the horse's hoofs brought a number of men outside their tents, who, seeing the pale, death-like face of the dispatch-bearer and the limp arm hanging by his side, knew instinctively what was the matter.

The latter, seeing the men around him, drew out his blood-soaked dispatch, and hoarsely whispering: "The general—dispatch—quick!" would have fallen from his horse had not a trooper rushed forward and catching him in his arms lifted him tenderly to the ground.

With the break of day the Indians, uttering their wild war-whoops, had charged upon the camp. Bravely had they been repulsed, only to come on again and again until their superior numbers should tell upon the white men. Now they were upon the ramparts, and the defenders, almost all of whom were grievously wounded, but who seemingly felt not their wounds in the presence of the enemy, heroically disputed every step. At last, just as a portion of the breastwork had fallen in and the Indians sprang, like panthers at their prey, on the little square of white men who had hastily collected around their wounded, resolving to die as men, with their faces to the foe, a ringing cheer was heard and the relief force came thundering down the slope. And as the clear, rapid notes of the "charge" echoed across the plain, each drop of blood in those troopers' veins jingled exultingly against its neighbor as they dashed among the foe. There was a crash—cheers—a volley of musketry, and the Indians were flying across the prairie, pursued by the troopers whose carmined sabres were busy converting, as an officer of the regular army once said, bad Indians into good ones by giving them the route to the happy hunting grounds.

The fight was over and a portion of Colonel Mack's command was saved.

That night in a hospital tent there stood a number of soldiers around the couch of one on whom death had cast its shadow. There was a sorrowful look upon the faces of the watchers as they silently awaited the issue. At last the boy opened his eyes and looked around; then as a smile of pride lit up his face he murmured as his eyelids slowly drooped, "I g-o-t t-h-e-re." The angel beckoned and the two went hand in hand into the silent land.

"He's gone," they told the men who had gathered outside the tent awaiting the news—gone; and the evening wind took up the refrain and sighed it to the trees, which shook their heads as if in doubt, while the stars veiled their tremulous light, as heaven in its pity sprinkled its tears upon the camp.

Of dream-stories, the most realistic (and it is a true story) in a special collection of several hundred is this from the Pittsburg *Press*.

A DOCTOR'S DREAM.

SEVERAL years ago I resided in a wild, mountainous, and rather lonely region of Virginia. There was a railroad but a few rods in front of my door and a station and considerable village about a mile to the west. The nearest station to the east was about ten miles distant. I moved to the place with my young wife late in the autumn, and about the first of the following March I was attacked with typhoid fever and was ill for about a month. But thanks to a naturally strong constitution and the careful nursing of a loving and intelligent wife, I slowly recovered.

As soon as I got strong enough to sit up and walk a little I told my wife she had better take the cars and go and visit her brother, who lived about fifty miles east of us. She had been taking care of me so faithfully through my illness, both by day and night, that I feared her health and strength would fail her if she did not rest awhile. I knew she had been very anxious to go, and I felt sure that her brother and his family would be very glad to see her, and would try to make her visit a pleasant one. She hesitated about leaving me, fearing I might need her care; but after waiting a few days, and seeing that I continued to gain my health and strength, she decided to follow my advice. Accordingly, one pleasant morning about the middle of April, after doing everything she could for my comfort and bidding me to be careful about taking cold or walking too far, she started, intending to be gone a fortnight.

One day I exercised a little beyond my strength and felt quite tired at night and lay awake for a long time. At last I fell into an uneasy slumber and dreamed a very curious and startling dream. I seemed to have gone forward into the future a couple of days, and instead of Wednesday, the 24th, it seemed to be Friday, the 26th. It seemed in my dream that a heavy rain had been falling most of the day and all the day before,

but the evening was clear and pleasant and not very dark, though the moon was not shining. I seemed to be walking along the railroad toward the east. I first passed through a wood about half a mile wide; then for about a mile through fields containing a couple of farm-houses, one inhabited and the other deserted. I then entered another wood; and, after walking about a mile and a half, I came to a stream greatly swollen by the rain, which had weakened the railroad bridge so much that the passenger train, in attempting to cross, had broken it down, and the bridge and cars, completely wrecked, were lying on both sides of the stream, except portions that were floating down. Some of the passengers lay dead or dying among the ruins, some were floating in the water, and a few were clinging to trees and bushes on the bank. It was a fearful and heart-rending sight.

The next day, early in the morning, it commenced raining and continued to rain through the day and following night. I felt very lonely and uneasy all day, which feeling was increased by receiving a letter from my wife, saying that she intended to come home on Friday night by the express train. I retired late, feeling much worried on account of my fearful dream. And to add to this fear, presentiment, or whatever you may call it, the dream was repeated, and even more distinct and vivid than the first time.

When I arose in the morning the rain was still falling. This was Friday and therefore was the day on which my wife was to start for home. There were two passenger trains from the east each day, one at nine o'clock in the forenoon and the other at nine in the evening. This last was the express train and the one on which my wife was coming.

Toward the middle of the afternoon the rain ceased falling and the clouds slowly cleared away. The dream had made such an impression on my mind that I resolved to attempt to find the stream I had seen so plainly in my dreams, and if it appeared at all dangerous to attempt to stop the train before reaching it. Accordingly, soon after the rain was over, I got ready and started. I had never before had occasion to visit the station in this direction, and was therefore entirely unacquainted with this part of the country. But I found everything just as it had appeared in my dream.

Immediately after starting I passed through the wood I had seen in my dream and then entered the open field and found the two farm-houses, one inhabited and the other deserted. In fact, everything was as natural as if I had really been this way before. I walked slowly, and late in the afternoon I came to the stream, which flowed rapidly and seemed much swollen. But the bridge, instead of being broken down and mingled with the broken cars and mangled passengers, was still standing; and though its timber looked quite old and weather-beaten, there seemed to be little danger of its breaking down beneath the weight of a passing train. There was a heavy freight train due from the West about six o'clock, and I resolved to wait at least until it came, and if it passed over in safety there could be, I thought, but little danger of accident to the lighter passenger train.

In due time it came thundering along and passed safely over the bridge. But, though it might have been owing to my excited imagination, it seemed to me that the bridge bent and shook beneath the weight of the train in a manner highly suggestive of danger. At all events, I resolved to wait a while longer and see if the stream, which was still rising, would have any apparent effect upon the bridge. I took with me a lantern and also a thick blanket to protect me from the damp night air.

Shortly after sunset, as I was sitting a few rods from the stream, I heard a loud splash, and hurrying to the bridge I saw that a portion of the bank on the opposite side had broken away, and also that the action of the water, or some other cause, had weakened the foundations of the bridge in such a manner that a portion of the line was bent and lowered enough to make it impossible for a train to cross. I immediately crossed the bridge, resolved to stop the train if possible before it reached the bridge and certain destruction.

I went on in the direction from which the train was to come, and soon found a good place which commanded a view of the line for a considerable distance. I lit my lantern, wrapped my blanket closely around me, and sat down to my wearisome watch of two hours. The night was clear, but not very dark, though no moon was shining. I suffered nothing from cold, as it was remarkably warm, even for the climate of Virginia,

and I succeeded in keeping awake, though the task was a difficult one.

Slowly the moments passed by; but at last I saw by my watch that the time had nearly expired, and a few moments would decide the fate of the train and its human freight. Soon I saw a light, far away and very small at first, but rapidly growing larger and brighter. I arose, trembling with excitement, and commenced swinging the lantern above my head, and as the train drew near I doubled my exertion and shouted as loud as I could.

Onward came the train at a rapid speed.

It was a time of terrible suspense to me. Should the engineer fail to see my signal, or not see it in time to stop the train before going a few rods past me, I knew that no human power could save it. On it came, and, just as I gave up my exertions and stepped from the line, my frantic signals were observed, arousing the sleepy brakemen like an electric shock, who flew to their stations.

The train was quickly stopped, and I then informed the engineer and conductor of the danger ahead, while the frightened passengers left the carriages and gathered around me. Many a brave man grew pale when he learned what a fearful death he had so narrowly escaped.

Among the passengers I found my wife, not mangled and lifeless, but alive and well, though somewhat frightened, and a good deal surprised at seeing me. The conductor gave me a seat next my wife, and then had the train backed to the station it had just left, from which telegrams were sent to warn all other trains of the danger.

In the morning my wife and I took the stage for home.

Love is fervent and heroic in Mexico, and the Mexican character has a decided tinge of the desperate and of the mercenary. Real romances of love and danger and heroism come often, in Mexican life, as witness such a story as this by Le Roy Armstrong in the Chicago *Herald*.

TWO MEXICAN LEGENDS.

THIS was the first legend:

Don Miguel Hidalgo's revolution was on. Like a whirlwind the impetuous priest was sweeping all opposition before him. Native rule was restored for the first time in two hundred years. The Church was the State. His subjects were free. They were jubilant. The land and all of its wealth was theirs. The sky with all of its beauties was for them. The despised race of aristocrats, the arrogant brood of invaders, were as nothing to these later legions, who would reconquer their own. The spirit of the leader inspired the masses, and the torch of revolution seemed certain to sweep a pathway to the hall of Montezuma.

Mines were wrested from those who had held them. The mints were in the possession of the patriots. Silver and gold poured into Hidalgo's coffers, a mingled white-and-yellow stream. Patriots were bringing virgin metal from the old pits east of Lake Caiman to the mills at Durango. An almost fabulous quantity had been collected at Vale Meda, and a party was formed to give it safe conduct to the mint. Fourteen mules were loaded with the treasure, and on the morning of the 5th of May, 1811, it started to the south.

Priests from the convent at Juarez and Meda accompanied the train, walking before and swinging their censers as they chanted the prayers of the church. Men walked behind and trusted their safety to reverence when they should have trusted to arms. Unknown to them the vice-regal army had conquered the forces of Hidalgo, and the presiding genius of the new revolution was a prisoner.

They went forward, slowly winding between the rich fields, across ditches which had furnished the land with irrigation ever since the advent of the Aztecs. They

climbed the low mountain range to the east of the lake and camped for the night at the summit of the pass.

At midnight the enemy surprised them. The fight was short but bitter. The royalists were victors. It was a battle of extermination. With a savagery that seems to have cast a stain of blood on the nation, the victors had no sooner conquered the treasure than they fell to disputing about its division. Blows followed words, and at daylight a single Spaniard stood the sole survivor and the sole possessor of that wealth. He carried the paniers to an abandoned shaft and threw them in, heaping upon them a mingled mass of saddles, clothing, and weapons. Into the dark depths of the pit he tossed the jewelled censers, the crosses and rosaries of the priests, and then upon the whole he cast the still warm bodies of Hidalgo's followers. Driving the mules before him, he joined Calleja's army and fell in the first battle with Iturbide.

The records at Meda and Juarez told the amount of the treasure. Between there and the mint it had been lost, and all the cunning of all the leaders who rose to transient power in succeeding years was taxed in vain to find the place of hiding.

"It is in the white cliff," the Spaniard had said in dying, but no one had ever been able to locate that landmark.

That was the first legend.

"Yes, I have heard it," said Fennimore. "I have heard it at every town in Mexico. Just now it is located in the neighborhood of Lake Caiman. When we were at Santiago it was in the Mountains of Leon. When we were at Guaymas it was up the Vugui River. If we ever get down to Tizapan it will be on Lake Chapala. It's a legend, I tell you—nothing more."

"Let me tell you another legend," said Morse. "It might help you to believe this one."

"Go ahead, so you don't make it tedious."

"Well, this legend says that Bozar, the father of Tais, knows where the silver is hidden."

Fennimore was all attention in a moment. "Go on," he said.

"Bozar knows where it is. That is the reason he will not work and yet manages to live so well. He lolls around in the shade down there at Parras, and when he is out of money he goes away in the night and

is gone for weeks. When he comes back he has plenty of silver. It is not minted. It is in the antimony and arsenic, just as they used to mine it before they had modern methods. He puts it in the care of the alcalde down there at the town and lives like a prince for another year. Have you never heard that tradition?"

Fennimore never had.

"Well, ask any ranchero between here and there next time you go down; ask any shop-keeper in Parras; ask the very peons in the plaza—they will all tell you the same thing."

This was something of a revelation to Fennimore. It was all such a country of marvellous things. Its history from first to last was so much like a fairy tale that one could scarcely breathe Mexican air for a year and retain the American habit of incredulity. He believed the story. Nothing was more reasonable. The mines had been opened for the past five hundred years. He himself had seen them with a century's growth of laurel on the earth that a forgotten generation had drawn up. Time and again he had located paying mines in these old abandoned shafts, and found profitable returns in the ore that would not reward the ruder methods of earlier miners. He knew how common were great stores of silver in those days, and he knew the half-savage habit of Hidalgo's time was well illustrated in the narrative to which we had listened.

It did not occur to him that he wanted to believe the legend.

And there was Tais. She might know something of the later and more interesting tale. Since he was going to Parras he would ask her. He found the girl in the cool garden at the back of her house. It was not easy to speak of such a thing. He had begun her acquaintance because a Mexican town in winter was an insufferably dull place. He had begun by teaching her the beauties of American women and the English tongue. He ended by finding more beauty in her own. He remembered yet with a pang his little thrill of conceited gratulation the first night he met her. He felt honored to-day, when, with sincere regard, he was permitted to stand before her, to hold her hand for a moment, and to help her gather up again the curious wools with which she was working. He felt abashed when he came to speak of the legend.

Yes, she had heard it. Did she believe it? Why not? It was all possible. It was all very reasonable, Where was the white cliff?

Tais laughed at that.

"No one does know. They have hunted the country all over, and there is nothing. If I could find you the white cliff I would not ever rest till I had found out the silver."

The dark eyes were dancing with something more than animation. It was not the silver fever. She knew nothing of that thirst which had brought him here to compass riches.

And it was for him she would find the treasure! He caught the naive confession—and accused himself afresh. But the longing for wealth was very strong, and Fennimore continued:

"There is another legend. They say your father knows where the white cliff is. It is even said he goes to the pit which contains the treasure; that he goes there once a year, and brings away silver enough to keep him in luxury. They tell me he has done so for more than twenty years, and no one has been able to follow him."

There was a shade of pain, somewhat of displeasure, on her face. She changed her position in the hammock, and bent lower over the wools.

"He go away some time and he come back with money." The subject that seemed to have but one possible interpretation to him was clearly a painful one to her. She was abashed at something he did not understand.

"What would he do if you told me all about it?"

"What he would do? I do not know. I do not care. If I did know I would tell you. Do you think——" and she turned to him swiftly. The dark eyes were brimming now, and there was something of protest and pleading, and—and—something that looked very like shame in them at the last.

He felt the keenest possible sense of abasement. It occurred to him he had come here to wound her; to find out a secret which, if she possessed at all, she had the best of reasons for withholding from him. What had he or other aliens in the country ever done that they should be thus rewarded? But the ruling passion conquered him again.

"You say he goes away, and that he does come back with money. Where, then, does he get it?"

The passion of the Mexican showed in her face for the first time. It was indignation at the question. Then it was defiance. Then it was confusion. She fairly cowered before him as she said:

"Do not ask me that. You would hate me. But he does not get that silver."

This was very puzzling. He hesitated for a time, looking at her, till something pitiful in her attitude appealed to his better nature, and he lost the white cliff in the pure heart before him.

"Well, bother the silver, Tais," he said. "Let it all go. Come for a walk on the alameda. I am going back to Caiman to-morrow, and will not be in Parras again for a month."

She thanked him with her eyes but did not at once rise from the hammock. The invitation had reassured her. Whatever it was that made her reticent about her father's resources, this generous stranger would not regard it. He knew she suffered and that she was not to blame, and she thanked him profoundly. But she did not go with him.

"I cannot walk with you. My father has found out something."

"Great man for making discoveries," said the chief of engineers. "What has he found this time?"

"He know you came here for me, and he do not like it. He is watching you now."

"He is watching me now, is he? Well, then, he will be favored with a sight of the finest leave-taking ever celebrated south of the Rio Grande. Good-by, Tais."

"Good-by, good-by." Her dark face was radiant with a love that defied all authority. "You will come to me again?"

"I will come again, and when I do you will go with me, will you not, Tais?"

It needed no words to answer that. Her clinging hands, her brimming eyes, her beating heart—these were pledge enough. She watched him walk away, so strong, so careless of the danger she knew well; and then she turned again to the life of ease and luxury that seems more odious to her each time this stronger current from a cooler clime touched the waters of her life.

Fennimore finished the purchase of his supplies, had them strapped on the mules, and went back to the camp at Caiman. Next day he took two peons and rowed across the lake to inspect the mines on the farther side, leaving Morse in charge at the eastern shore. When half-way over, one of the men sat bolt upright, dropped his oar and stared at the blank hills they had left, his eyes dilating as though they had opened on a vision. The loss of stroke almost capsized the boat.

"Pull up there, Carlos," commanded Fennimore. His fellow stared angrily at the startled oarsman. He resumed his work without a word; but there was a wonderful light in his small, black eyes, and a singular pallor on his dusky face.

It was well toward sundown when they started back. The two peons sat side by side, as before, but they evidently had some understanding. They chatted together in a fraternal way, quite unlike anything known before. They were silent when Fennimore was near them, and delayed departure by their more than usual dilatory ways.

The sun was a great blazing globe in the west when they left the shore, and Fennimore, sitting there in the stern with the tiller lines in his hands, thought he had never seen a sight more beautiful. The effects of the sunset on the water before him and at either hand was wonderful. The cliffs that rose from the eastern shore were tinted with a splendor no art could portray. Little by little the shadows stole across the water and crept up the slanting hills. The farther shore was softened in color as the sun went down, till the mountains beyond seemed lifted and drifting—crimson ships on a purple sea.

What was that?

A blazon of white stood out on the cliff. It was as plain as the mountain. Here was the white cliff!

In the swiftness of the revelation he started to point toward it, and his hand, tightly grasping the tiller rope, threw them about. One of the peons had half-risen, but was forced to his seat again. That movement recalled Fennimore to the boat. Both his men had ceased rowing and were glaring at him with basilisk eyes, the light of murder shining from both of them. Suddenly one of them unshipped his oar and started forward again.

But life in a land infested with bandits had taught promptness to Fennimore, and in an instant he had covered the man with a pistol.

"Take up your oars, you two," he said steadily. "For a copper cent I would kill both of you and throw your bodies in the lake."

He understood them now. They had seen that lost landmark on the way over, and had tried to wait around the mills until it was too dark to see it coming back, when he would be facing the mountain. "I ought to end the two of you," he said wrathfully.

Really, it would have simplified matters; and they were so sure of his ability in the matter that they never moved from a straight course all the way to the beach.

What should he do with them? Evidently they knew the significance of the discovery as well as he, and were as eager to avail themselves of its possibilities. It was a secret he did not wish to share with any one. Peons or other natives were particularly unwelcome. Yet there was nothing for it now but to assume and keep the mastery as he always had done—as the foreigner ever does in Mexico.

He had time to speculate as he watched the illusion dissolve. The nearer he approached the cliff the less of white there was to be seen. Clearly enough it was a matter of distance and angle. From no other place could the beacon be seen. How well had the Spaniard hidden the treasure! How fortune had favored the American in its discovery! Surely he could master these miserable serfs and keep what he had so nearly found. For the man had no more doubt of finding the pit with the monks' silver at the bottom of it than he had of finding the camp when the journey of the day was over.

Early in the morning he took some blasting-powder and climbed the steep road to the very top of the mountain. There, close to the brink of the precipice, was a shaft, so old that stunted trees were growing far down in its flaring mouth. He could not see the bottom, but a pebble dropped into the dark abyss was seconds in reaching the bottom. He wondered how it could have been dug so deep in the days of imperfect machinery. He laughed with the certainty that away down there below him was the treasure which once had started to the coffers of Hidalgo.

But one thing troubled him. No man had descended into that old shaft in many years. How had Bozar drawn his supplies from this source? Where, then, had he found money? What could account for the confusion of Tais when her father's resources were mentioned? Was the man simply one of thousands who lived by brigandage? Ah! but that was a painful reflection.

Fennimore started down to the beach again. He was keeping close to the cliff, and the road, so long deserted, was very dimly outlined. While pushing aside the manzanita bushes he came to a little shelving rock that jutted out from the face of the cliff and offered a footing. He followed it, creeping along with his back to the rock, his hands outspread beside him, his eyes on the camp below where the peons were at work in their leisurely way, till it grew broader, shelving inward, and hid him from the narrow strip of sand between the lake and the foot of the mountain.

Here was a cave. He gathered some of the dried bushes at its mouth and made a torch. Inside was simply a great cavern with a vaulting roof and masses of rock hanging above the entrance. They seemed just ready to fall and punish intrusion with captivity.

Standing at the door and looking upward, he saw some stunted bushes. They suggested those that grew in the mouth of the shaft. The bottom of that pit could not be far from the roof of the cavern. He was fairly dizzy with impending fortune. His heart beat painfully, but there were times when he almost gasped for breath. Surely the romance of the past was repeating itself, and he was the recipient of an ancient legacy.

He clambered about on the rocks within, tapping here and there and listening for the hollow sound he knew would tell of the pit and the monks' treasure. The powder-can was in the way and he laid it down.

There was a shadow in the door of the cave. Fennimore dropped his torch and sprang to the ground. Bozar was there, and the two peons who had rowed across the lake yesterday. Before he could draw his pistol they had covered him with their weapons.

"What did you find?" asked Bozar. His passive face wore a demoniac light above the rifle-barrel. "What did you find?"

"Nothing," responded Fennimore, at the absolute end of his resources, and groping helpless for a means of escape, walking slowly backward into the deeper shadow. "Nothing."

"Stay there with it," cried the Mexican, and the sharp report of his weapon punctured the sally of wit.

But there was a brighter flash, a more thunderous report, a wilder tumult of imprisoned air. The torch had ignited the blasting-powder, and tons of rock were hurled from the face of the white cliff. Fennimore lay crippled and bleeding under a mass of *débris* at the back of the cave, choking and strangling with the sulphurous air and the dust. He was in utter darkness, for the entrance had been filled with the falling stone.

He had scarcely time to realize how utterly he was lost, when the silence that followed the explosion was broken by the dropping of a single rock from the roof of the cave. In a moment another followed, and then down came a mass of mingled dirt and bowlders. For a moment a very stream of rubbish ran from the rent above him, and then a ray of daylight darted through the hole in the roof and shone straight in the centre of the cavern.

He had found the bottom of the pit.

Spite of his wounds, spite of the hopelessness of his situation, Fennimore tried to clamber to his feet and gaze at the heap before him. He fell back faint at the sight that met his eyes and the convincing proof of his splendid fortune. There were bones of men and bones of mules. There were ancient stirrups and metal saddle-frames. There was a cluster of censers, twined together by their chains, and a cluster of rosaries, tangled and broken.

He shut his eyes and dropped across the apex of the heap, his hands grasping the relics of Hidalgo's age, his senses numbed by the hopes of his own, while the sunlight that had looked unmoved on all uprisings, shone down upon him through a hundred feet of earth.

Morse and his men took up the mangled bodies of Bozar and the peons.

"What on earth were they blasting up there?" he asked; and there was no one to tell him. The Mexican was taken to his home at Parras.

"Where is Fennimore?" was the first question of

Tais. And there was no one to answer that. She called the alcalde to watch with her father, and went back with Morse to Lake Caiman. Her wits supplied what helps they needed and Fennimore was found.

Then they searched the cave for the treasure. They moved every ounce of earth that had come down from that ancient shaft. They heaped the bones and the stirrups and the censers together, and that was all they ever found of the reputed wealth that had started to Durango in 1811.

"Why, what does it all mean?" demanded Fennimore, as he swung in the hammock at Parras, and knew that the white cliff and the monks' pit and the patriotic cavalcade were secrets no longer. "How does it happen there was no treasure there? How do you account for it?"

"Just as you accounted for the whole thing at the beginning, Fennimore," said Morse. "That story of the fourteen loads of silver was a legend—nothing more. Something like it is current in Leon, and at Guaymas, and down at Tizapan. We can find bones and a crucifix in half the shafts in Mexico, but the donkey-loads of silver—they have vanished with the Incas. Legends, Fennimore; nothing but legends."

"But Tais is real," said the engineer, as he drew her dark head down to the pillow.

"Tais," said Morse impressively, "is a million reals. She saw you through solid rock. She went to you straight as the light through that Toltec shaft. She was ten men in the work till we had you safe. Since then she has been mostly woman. She found you and bound up your wounds and gave you her home. There's Mexican treasure."

And that was the end of the second legend.

A blind and crippled romance, but a romance nevertheless, gathered from the slums by the New York *World*.

"BROOMS."

"BROOMS!" his cry rang out as he cautiously felt his way along the pavement, his sightless eyes fixed on vacancy. "Brooms! Brooms!"

The East Side loungers, the frowsy-haired tenement women, the men along the river-side, all knew him well and repeated his story as he passed.

"Brooms," as he was familiarly called, had been an inmate of a certain blind asylum, but, daring to revolt against the tyrannical régime he had been expelled. He came to one of the wretched tenements close down by the river to stay with a friend until he could get a start in life. There is plenty of sympathy in the slums, and when these people, who could scarcely scrape pennies together to buy food, heard "Brooms's" story they chipped in, set the blind man up in business, and stood, with hands in empty pockets or on portly hips, watching "Brooms" feeling his way along the street, with the conscious air of benefactors.

One day a shabby little woman with short hair, squinting eyes, and a red flannel bandage round her throat, inquired for "Brooms." Being told he was at business, she calmly entered his miserable apartment, empty, cold, and cheerless, proceeded to build a fire and set the kettle on. To Mrs. Gloriana O'Shaunnesy and other ladies who felt that the morals of the tenement must be conserved and who flocked in to learn her intentions, she said that she had been a seamstress at the asylum and had known and loved "Brooms"—that now she had come to marry him and take care of him.

Here was news indeed. When "Brooms" came tapping home that night expecting only a cold bite, he was received at the door by motherly hands, led in, given a cup of hot tea, and then the situation was explained to him. "Brooms" had no objection to being married and looked after, so the two were made one by a good-natured justice next day.

Now dawned poor blind "Brooms's" golden era.

The little woman nobly fulfilled her mission. The shirts she stitched by hand late at night brought the money to make "Brooms's" life quite comfortable. He was not asked to retire from business, but was not permitted to overwork. When he set out on his daily rounds his homely, shabby little wife accompanied him to the street, saw him safely started, and then returned to her everlasting stitching. The neighbors who ran in at their meal-times saw "Brooms" sitting before a well-filled plate of corned beef and cabbage, while the shabby little woman was munching dry bread and bits of broken meat. She denied herself everything, that "Brooms" might be comfortable, warm, and well fed. It was a poor, prosaic little romance that was enacted in this miserable tenement, but none the less genuine.

One day "Brooms" started on a new circuit. He had been repeatedly warned not to venture in unknown territory, but a desire for exploration drove him out of his beaten paths. He got on admirably for a block or two, then, with the recklessness of bravado, decided to cross the crowded thoroughfare. No one could quite tell how it happened. There were shouts, cries, a crash, a block; crowds seemed to start from the paving stones, and two blue-coated policemen dragged out the inert, shapeless mass. Poor "Brooms" was quite dead.

* * * * * *

Next morning, when Mrs. O'Shaunessy softly entered the poor little home with a cup of tea for the "widdy," she gave a shriek, dropped the tea, and fled. Kneeling by the dead form on the bed was the shabby, plain little woman, also dead. Whether worn out by hard work and insufficient food or dead from a broken heart, who can tell? But the faithful little soul had followed "Brooms" out into the unknown to "take care of him."

But for sheer coolness of the frontier desperado, how is this story, from the New York *World?*

A BATTLE ON THE BORDER.

"It was in '75," said the frontiersman, "that I first crossed the plains. A mining boom was in progress at a place that I will call San Pedro. It was about two hundred miles from Denver and not a railroad near it. So I went down by stage. I worked a while at mining, but I didn't make a strike, so I drifted down to a small town then known as Cow Gap, but dignified now by a longer name. I spent most of my money there, and one day I took it into my head to start out on a tramp. I headed for Pueblo, a good way off, I knew, but I was in no hurry, and, as there were several ranches only half a day's walk apart, I was not troubled about food and shelter. Folks are very hospitable in the West. I managed to get off the right trail while crossing one of the mountains, and although I was on some kind of wagon-road I didn't come to any ranch. I had some bacon, salt, matches, five pounds of flour and a dozen large potatoes with me, so I had no trouble in getting dinner. I didn't much relish the idea of camping out, as I had no blanket, but had about resigned myself to it when I saw the smoke of a ranch.

"When I reached the house I was attacked by two enormous dogs, but I beat them off and shouted until a woman appeared. She seemed surprised and somewhat annoyed to see me, but when I offered to pay for my board she asked me into the house, where a man was sitting by a huge fire. It seemed that he was simply a neighbor. The master of the house was away, the woman said. The neighbor was just keeping her company during his absence. He was very sociable, but he seemed a trifle uneasy and wanted to find out all about me. I had nothing to conceal, so I made his pumping process easy work, and when, as I supposed, he was satsified that it was perfectly safe to leave me alone with the woman, he said good-by to both of us, mounted his horse and rode away.

"The ranchman was expected home by eight, but he had not arrived when the clock struck ten. The wo-

man did not seem uneasy at his absence. She and I had been chatting about many things. She had just shown me where I could sleep and I was preparing to turn in, when I heard a horse's hoofs ringing on the frosty road. It struck me that the animal was being ridden for all it was worth, and I wondered whether any accident had befallen my hostess' husband and if the rider had come laden with bad news. The horse was reined up short at the gate leading to the house. I peered out through the window. A medium-sized man with a handsome beard was rapidly removing the saddle and bridle. These he tossed inside the gate and then gave the horse a smart cut with his whip. The animal—a fine Kentucky-bred black—wheeled and galloped off at a tremendous pace. The man listened until the hoof-beats died away in the distance and then entered the house. I heard him talking with his wife, for I did not doubt that the new-comer was the owner of the ranch. I wondered why he had ridden so furiously and then turned his splendid horse adrift, for the night was chilly and the horse very warm. Presently footsteps approached my door and I heard my hostess' voice.

"'My husband wants to speak with you at once,' she said. 'Will you please make haste?' Wondering more than ever at this request, I hastily resumed such of my clothes as I had thrown aside and joined the couple in the living-room. The man was eating some supper that she had prepared. He seemed hurried, but perfectly cool. She looked worried.

"'Sorry to disturb you, stranger,' he said, looking up as I entered the room. 'My wife tells me that you asked for shelter and she has given it to you. I'm glad to meet you, but it's unfortunate that you happened here to-night. From the look of you I don't think you would betray the man whose grub you have eaten, but I can't afford to take chances. I'm Tom King.'

"While he was speaking a dozen conjectures flitted across my mind. 'Did he mean to kill me?' I wondered, and as he declared his determination to risk nothing I involuntarily felt for my revolver. As his name—that of a noted desperado—left his lips, however, I gazed into the muzzle of a Colt .45. He must have had the weapon on his knee. It is scarcely necessary to say that I did not attempt to draw my 'shoot-

ing-iron.' I had learned sufficient to know when a man got 'the drop' on me. Observing this he lowered his weapon.

"'Don't take offence, young man,' he said. 'Don't fool with your gun, either. Lay it on the table.'

"I complied.

"'You are recently from the East, are you not?' he asked. I answered in the affirmative.

"'Ah,' he said reflectively. 'I was in Wall Street fifteen years ago.'

"Something in his appearance, I know not what, made me look closely at him. 'So your name now is Tom King,' I remarked. 'Did you ever meet my father, Nicholas Greener?'

"He started from his chair. 'You don't mean to say that you are little Fred Greener? I see the likeness now, though. Well, your father did me many a good turn. I'm more sorry than ever that you should have come here at this time. The sheriff and a large posse are after me and I guess there'll be a fight.'

"The ranchman was an old friend of my father's. He used to visit my family very frequently when I was a youngster in knee-breeches. He wore no beard in those days. He had often given me tips, and he was, I knew, then a most extravagant man. I dimly remembered that he had held a prominent position in 'the Street' and that he suddenly ceased coming to our house. I remembered also that my father had spoken regretfully of his fall, and that the commercial world had been astounded at the magnitude of the series of robberies that he had committed. I also knew that he had been arrested and had 'jumped' his bail—I think with the consent of his sureties. He watched me for a moment while I pondered on these things. Then he spoke again:

"'Don't breathe my name to any living soul, Fred,' he said. 'It was supposed that I was drowned on board the *Merry Monarch*, bound for Buenos Ayres. Never correct that impression. Now for the events of the present. If the sheriff happens to meet my horse down the road he will call in at the old ranch before he comes here. If not, he will be at the gate in fifteen minutes. I won't surrender and he means business.'

"He paused and looked inquiringly at me. 'What do they want you for?' I asked.

"'I have a fondness for other people's horses. I got a good number last winter. I never rob my neighbors, but the present sheriff's father lives in the next county and I took one of the old man's horses. They swore vengeance. They hadn't any proof against me then, but they got on my trail last week and want to arrest me on a false charge that they got a poor fool, who lost a mule lately, to swear to. I never stole a mule in my life and I won't be arrested to lie in jail until this sheriff can prove something against me. Now, I don't want you to get into trouble, but as you are here you had better stay until the thing's settled. You need not help either side.'

"During our conversation Mrs. King had been 'clearing the decks for action,' as a sailor would put it. She had brought half a dozen rifles, a shot-gun, and two Colt's revolvers into the room. Boxes of cartridges already lay close at hand, and thick shutters, evidently constructed for the purpose, were fastened on the windows. My revolver still lay on the table. King transferred it to his pocket. 'If I am killed, tell your story, omitting any reference to our former acquaintance,' he said. 'This will confirm it and so will Mary, here. Won't you, Mary?'

"A tear trickled down his wife's cheek. 'Don't talk so, Tom,' she said. 'But, of course, if anything should happen I'll see that this friend of yours is not arrested.'

"'Her people live in Kansas; she is provided for all right if I die,' said King, as his wife left the room. 'Hello! Here they are.'

"The sound of horses' hoofs was distinctly audible. The house was protected in the rear by a bluff too precipitous to climb. One of the windows, at which King took his station, commanded the road and all approaches. The night was moonlit. The thud of hoofs came very near and then ceased. I watched the road from a loophole in one of the shutters. Soon a white flag appeared from behind the bluff. It was followed by the man who carried it. He halted at the gate for a moment and hailed the house. The dogs sprang savagely at him, but seemingly recognized an acquaintance, for when he spoke to them the creatures licked his hand.

"'It's Ezra Thornton,' said King, in a low tone.

"'Tom! hello, Tom!' shouted the flag-bearer.

"'Answer him, Mary,' said King. Mrs. King opened the door.

"'Tom's not at home, Mr. Thornton,' she said. 'It's so late that I can't ask you in.'

"'The sheriff is here, Mrs. King; he knows that Tom is at home. I came along so as to prevent trouble, if I could. Now, it ain't any good Tom's fighting. The sheriff's ridden from Pine Lake on his trail, and he means to take him if he has to burn down the house. Don't let him make trouble, Mrs. King.'

"'Shut the door, Mary,' said King; a half smile was on his face. His wife sighed.

"'It's no use, Mr. Thornton; you must tell the sheriff that Tom's not at home and that I can't open the house at this time of night,' she said. Thornton shook his head sadly and retraced his steps.

"Five minutes elapsed. They seemed an age to me, but King lighted a cigar and smoked it as placidly as if he were back in New York, waiting to take his wife to the theatre. Then a dozen men appeared from behind the bluff and started for the gate. King swung his Winchester to his shoulder, flung open the door, and hailed them. 'Go back or throw up your hands!'

"The barrels of a dozen rifles gleamed in the moonlight as they were focused on the door, but King had shut it almost as he spoke.

"The sheriff and his men slowly retreated. Neither side seemed desirous of beginning an attempt at bloodshed. As they reached the shadow of the bluff the posse halted and the sheriff himself stepped forward and formally called upon King to surrender. King took no notice of the command. Then the sheriff said something to his followers and they started on a run for the gate. King raised his rifle again, took steady aim through the hole in the shutter of his window, and fired.

"The sheriff dropped. The others came on. King fired again. Another man fell, clutching at the ground and swearing horribly as he rolled over in agony. Then his companions halted.

"'Drop!' called King, and I crouched below the level of the window. King and his wife were both on their knees out of danger. As I stooped there was a sharp volley. Bullets struck the walls, which were impenetrable, and two holes in the shutter of King's win-

dow showed that the marksmen had selected the right target. King had risen to his feet and fired three times, wounding two more men, when another volley rang out. He was in the act of pulling the trigger. Three balls penetrated the shutter and one wounded him in the shoulder.

"Mrs. King turned pale, but she said nothing and brought some warm water from the kitchen, with which she stood ready to bathe his wound. He had no time to stop for that. The sheriff's men were almost within such an angle of the door as would render it impossible to aim at them from the loopholes. King's rifle cracked again. It was answered by another volley from outside and he reeled back, wounded in the neck and thigh. He fainted from the pain and I, too, fainted, from the nervous strain, I suppose—I was only a youngster then, you know.

"When I regained consciousness the sheriff was inside the house. He had been only slightly wounded. After King fell, his wife talked with the attacking party and admitted them on the sheriff's promise that her husband's life should be protected. It would have been madness to bar them out, as they told her plainly that they would break in at any cost, even if they risked her life.

"Two of the men wounded by King were very badly hurt. A doctor had come up from Cow Gap with the sheriff, anticipating bloodshed, for King had often quietly but forcibly declared his intention of resisting to the death any attempt that might be made to arrest him. The doctor had remained with King's friend Thornton behind the bluff while the fight was in progress. He attended to all the wounded. King was painfully but not mortally hurt. One of the others, however, was in a very dangerous condition. The whole party camped for the night at the ranch. I was placed under arrest on suspicion of being an accomplice of the horse-thief who had been my father's friend.

"The next day we went down to Cow Gap, where I was released on proving the truth of my story, but I was enjoined from leaving town, as they wanted me for a witness at King's trial, which would take place as soon as his condition permitted. A week later he was brought down and locked up in the wooden shanty that they called a jail. He broke out one night and made

good his escape, much to the disgust of his jailers, who supposed that weakness would effectually debar him from any attempt of that kind. A hunt was instituted by the sheriff, who had quite got over his wound, but King had covered his trail as skilfully as when he fled from New York, and the search was completely fruitless. His wife vanished at the same time, and an attempt was made to track her, but she did not go to her parents' home, and the authorities never solved the mystery of her disappearance."

A most comical predicament, vouched for in the *Dramatic Mirror* by Miss Marie Wainwright, the actress.

A COMBINATION LOCK.

In Chicago some years ago an actor and actress—husband and wife—who had grown tired of hotel-living, and who were booked for a stay of several weeks in that city, resolved to take a suite of furnished rooms and get their meals when and where their inclinations might direct. They arrived in Chicago on a Sunday, and, after some tiresome searching, found on Dearborn Street what they sought.

Evidently the building had been intended originally for office uses, as in the bedroom was a large safe or vault of the most massive construction. Instead of being used to hold securities of priceless value, it was devoted to the humbler duty of receiving clothing. The heavy steel door, some five inches thick, was supplied with a combination lock.

This was a novelty to the wife, who, as soon as she had bestowed some of her wraps in the safe, began a superficial study of the mechanism. She could not, of course, make out much about it, and her lord and master offered, in his superior wisdom, to explain it.

"All you have to do," he said, "is to think of a word, shut the door, then spell the word on this dial, turn the handle, and then no one can open it who doesn't know the combination. Now step in for a moment; I will lock you in on the word 'open' and let you out again in an instant."

The wife, who had not been married long enough to discover that her husband was not as clever as he thought, gayly stepped into the vault.

"It will be awfully dark and stuffy here with the door closed," she exclaimed.

"Don't be afraid, dear. I'll let you out again before you have time to think."

He turned the handle, worked the combination to "open," worked it back again, pulled at the door, but there was no sign of its yielding. Frantically he again ran the indicator over the letters making the word, but still the door would not budge. He shouted encour-

agingly to his wife, but it was evident that she could not hear him.

"Was she already dead for want of air!" was the first awful thought, but he remembered that the vault was at least six feet square, and even if perfectly air-tight must contain enough air to support life for some little time. But for how long? It was Sunday. It might be hours before he could find a locksmith, and even then it might take more hours to open that dreadful door. His darling might be dead! He would be her slayer! Perhaps the law would call it murder!

These thoughts flashed through his mind in less time than it takes to read them. After shouting some reassuring words he rushed up to the landlady's room, on the floor above, and breathlessly and almost unintelligibly told something of the trouble.

"You're the second fool who's got into a mess meddling with that safe," was the old woman's comforting comment.

"Never mind that!" he cried. "Can you get her out before she dies?"

"Yes, I can. *I* don't have things about I don't understand; and if I did find them, I wouldn't meddle with them."

"Never mind that, my good woman; only come and open the door."

"It's easy to see you ain't been long married," was her grumbling comment, as she waddled after him down the stairs. She gave a few turns to the handle and threw the door open. The wife was discovered in a dead faint, but evidently still alive.

A good many dollars spent in doctor's fees and a present for the landlady to some extent repaired the damages of the husband's experiment, but nothing could repair his eternally damaged reputation for omniscience. In after-days his wife was even occasionally known to hint that he had tried to kill her, and that she was sorry he hadn't succeeded and been duly hanged.

A day or two after the occurrence he said to the landlady: "How was it the door wouldn't open on the combination I used?"

"Because," she answered, "you must release the lock from one combination before you can set it on another. You men don't know everything, though you generally think you do."

ROMANCE

BEING

The Tales of the New York Story Club

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A humorous incident

Sample Copy of this Number sent on receipt of 15 cents.

Love and mystery—both are here. A story full of the most dramatic incidents and leading up to a startling climax. Is this explanation of the heroine's power satisfactory? By W. C. Morrow in the San Francisco *Argonaut*.

THE WOMAN OF THE INNER ROOM.

DR. OSBORNE, hastily summoned to the receiving hospital, found there a handsome, well-dressed young man with an ugly hole in his skull about an inch and a half above the left ear. The injured man evidently was not suffering, but the desperate nature of his hurt was seen in the deep pallor of his face. His expression was placid, unintelligent, and absolutely silly. Yet he was plainly alive—his breathing was good, his heart performed its functions, his temperature was normal, and his skin was warm and moist. Dr. Osborne cleaned the wound with a sponge.

"How was the lad hurt?" he asked of the officers who were standing about.

No one could tell. A few minutes ago some one had seen him staggering along the street, clinging to the house-walls to keep from falling, a thin stream of blood trickling down his face, and had pointed him out to a policeman.

Dr. Osborne looked closely at the wound. Then he tried to insert a finger in the opening, but failed. He looked around upon the men, and asked them to show him their hands.

"No," he said, after examining them; "your fingers are all too blunt. Farley, go and call my daughter—she is sitting in my buggy at the door."

Before she came, Dr. Osborne asked:

"Do you know who he is?"

None could inform him. Not a scrap of paper by which he might be identified could be found upon him.

The surgeon's daughter entered. She was an attractive girl—rather tall and slight, had brown eyes and hair, and carried herself with a fine unconscious grace. She glanced at the man lying on the operating-table, suddenly checked her advance, and became pale.

Her father, with a reassuring manner, took her by the arm and led her forward.

"Don't be alarmed, Agnes," he said; "I have tested your nerve before, and have never seen it fail. Let me see your hand." He took it in his and examined it closely. "That is just what I need," he resumed; "long, slender fingers—you have a beautiful hand, Agnes."

This embarrassed her, but she became stronger.

"Now, my child, I must learn the nature of the wound in this young man's head. Come a little closer, my dear; he does not know what is going on. Have you ever seen him before?"

"No," she replied, approaching nearer and regarding his face steadily; "but he appears to be a man of means and refinement."

"Yes; that is clear. But come closer, Agnes. Why, you are all right! You see, it is a small hole, and that probably accounts for the fact that he is still alive; but it has penetrated the skull, and that makes the case a very serious one. It is necessary that I know what made the wound, in order to determine what to do; and the quickest way in the world is to let the wound tell its own story. My fingers are so thick that I can do nothing. Yours are exactly suited."

"*My* fingers? What do you want me to do, father?"

"I want you to insert a finger in the wound and tell me what you find, after a careful examination of the edges of the bone."

The girl hesitated. "But—why?" she asked.

"So that I may know what instrument was employed. If the hole is round and has rather clean edges, it was made by a bullet—in which event there is no reasonable hope of recovery. If, however, it is three-cornered, or otherwise angular, or in any great degree ragged, then something else made it—a pick-axe or some other instrument; and in that case there is a bare chance of saving his life. Besides, the knowledge will be very useful to the officers in digging up what appears to be a mysterious crime. You can ascertain that, can't you?"

"I will try."

Under her father's direction, but in a gingerly manner, she stood behind the young man's head, her face

close above his, and put the fine, long forefinger of her left hand into the wound. As she did so her eyes met the empty stare of his. Very slowly and carefully, watching his face all the time, she felt the edges of the bone and then withdrew her finger.

"It is smooth and round," she said.

"Ah!" exclaimed her father; "then there is no hope, poor fellow! But let us try a little further. Agnes, my dear, you did that bravely, as I knew you would; but now I want you to put your finger in again, and push it very slowly and carefully as far as you can. The bullet may not have gone far."

The girl, again looking down upon the calm, peaceful face, with its blank stare and senseless smile, explored the wound with her finger. Her touch was sure and gentle, but as her finger came in contact with the brain, and she felt its warmth and the regular and smooth pressure of the pulsations, her nerves were severely strained. Still she looked down into the handsome young face, but she was growing pale. All of a sudden, for some wholly unaccountable reason, the young man's blank expression and silly smile passed away, and a certain intelligence sat upon his face. The surgeon saw this, and it appeared to him to be a matter of uncommon importance. At the same moment, a peculiar look came into his daughter's face. She had begun to relax in the course of fainting, but instantly she swung back upon a nervous balance which was so prominent as to suggest a strong stimulation. The young man looked up into her eyes with a vague interest; she looked down into his with fear and horror. Then she suddenly withdrew her finger and stepped back beyond the range of his vision. The look of vacuity again took a hold upon him. The girl, without addressing any one particularly, said, nervously and hurriedly:

"You had better send to the bank and tell his father."

"What bank?" asked her father in surprise.

"The Citizen's Bank."

"Who is his father?"

"Mr. Blanchard, the president of the bank. This is his son, Charles."

Her father looked at her with amazement, but he

refrained from asking her questions. He merely remarked:

"But you said just now that you did not know him."

The girl was confused and made no reply.

The surgeon sent an officer to the bank. His attention returned to the patient, and as his daughter had not made as thorough an examination as he desired, he asked her if she felt strong enough to make another attempt. She complied, but with much hesitation. Again did a sickness and weakness assail her as her finger slipped into the wound, and again did the young man's face brighten. He fixed his eyes on her face, seemingly in recognition, and in a thick, stammering voice he said:

"Why, Agnes, is it you? So *you* are the one—this is what jealousy has done. This is what I get for being his friend."

"Do you blame me, Charles?"

"Why should I? It is too late for that now."

"Does Frank know?"

"He does not; but she is madly in love with him."

"And she is a stranger to you?"

"Absolutely. I never saw her before. I believe he has her in hiding, and that he will shield her."

"But he is not a traitor."

"She may have some unaccountable hold upon him."

"He would not deceive me so."

"Who can tell?"

The excitement which had kept back the encroachment of weakness now failed. The girl withdrew her finger, and the young man sank back into his former lethargic condition. All color fled the girl's face; her eyes were fixed vacantly in a stare of horror.

"Agnes," said her father, approaching her hastily, "what is the matter? Are you faint?"

"I—I don't know, father." She trembled violently.

"What is all this he has been telling you?" he asked.

She was too far gone to reply, but her father mistook her weakness for hesitation.

"Come into the open air, my child. This repulsive ordeal and the ravings of that delirious man have borne too heavily upon your nerves. Come, my daughter."

Those were his words, but a great dread had arisen

within him. As soon as they had stepped without, he pressed the question upon her with a certain hardness which came from his anxiety:

"What does all this mean? What do you know about the shooting?"

Her voice was kept back by a gasp, and with a lurch she slipped from her father's grasp and went all disorganized down to the ground before he could save her. He picked her up, placed her in the buggy, and drove rapidly to his home. When she recovered she found her mother in anxious watch upon her, for her father had gone to see what could be done for the wounded man. Mrs. Osborne had been informed by her husband of the singular occurrence at the receiving hospital, and the good woman was unhappy over it. But with her usual tact she asked no questions, believing that the close understanding between her and her daughter would bring forth an explanation in safe time. She was disappointed, therefore, when Agnes, upon coming into consciousness, spoke no word of the most important matter. More than that, she said she had a grievous headache and desired to be left alone, that she might sleep.

Mrs. Osborne withdrew, and immediately the girl went about the task of slipping away from the house unseen. In a few minutes she was in the office of a young physician named Frank Armour.

There was nothing commonplace in this young man's appearance. He was tall, slender, and pale, and to the manifest effects of rigorous study were added evidences of some kind of trouble that was wearing him out. He occupied two rooms—a reception-room and, behind it, a consultation-room. She found him sitting in the front room; the door leading into the other was closed. His face brightened greatly when he saw her standing before him.

"Agnes!" he cried, "I am very glad to see you. All loads drop from my shoulders when your sweet face appears. You said the other day that you were not coming to the office any more for fear people would talk about you—as though that should make any difference, seeing that we are soon to be married!"

His manner was so gentle, so full of evidences of

genuine affection, that her suspicions concerning him were much weakened. But she had come to make sure of her position and the mysteries of the wounded man's speech had to be cleared up.

"Frank," she asked, "have you seen your friend Charles Blanchard to-day?"

"No; I haven't seen him since last night. By the way, he scolded me again for not taking him around to your house and introducing him to you. Now, really, Agnes, I don't think you ought to keep putting me off about bringing him, as he is really a very delightful man, and I am sure you will like him."

"We will talk about that some other time, Frank. There is something else I want to ask you now. Do you really think you love me and me alone?"

"I am very certain of it, Agnes; but I don't see any reason for such a question."

"I know that you never go into society, and you have told me that you pay attentions to no one except me."

"That is the truth, Agnes; but to save my life I don't understand you. You are pale and ill. Something has happened to give you trouble and you have suddenly become suspicious of me."

Should she tell him of the fatal wounding of his best friend? Was it not possible first to extort from him some explanation of that friend's singular disclosures? The fact that she had received this knowledge from him—if, indeed, knowledge it was—troubled her greatly. The man had sown distrust in her mind, and it was like poison.

"Frank," she said presently, unable to see him longer in ignorance of his friend's condition, "Charles Blanchard has been seriously hurt, and I came to tell you so."

"Seriously hurt?" asked Armour in alarm; "when and how?"

"He was found less than two hours ago and taken to the receiving hospital, where my father is attending him now."

The young physician was now upon his feet, nervous and excited.

"How was he hurt, Agnes? Tell me all about it."

"Nothing is known except that he was found staggering along the street with a pistol wound in the head."

Armour's face was livid, and his trembling legs nearly failed to support his weight.

"He was not killed instantly?" he asked.

"No; but he is unconscious."

"Certainly."

"The bullet must have been a small one."

"No doubt, no doubt!" cried the unhappy man; "I must go to see him at once."

He picked up his hat and was starting away, expecting her to leave the room with him. But she sat still, remarking:

"I will wait until you return, if you promise to come back soon."

Armour's disappointment and annoyance were visibly manifest. He shot a quick glance toward the door of the adjoining room, and then walked over to it and cautiously tried the knob. The door was locked. He made a show of feeling in his pocket for the key, but his whole manner was so openly embarrassed that the sharp-sighted girl noticed it.

"Agnes," said he, turning upon her somewhat impatiently, "there is no doubt I shall be gone a long time, and it would be unreasonable for me to ask you to wait."

"Nevertheless," she said, in rather a hard tone, looking him steadily in the eyes, "I will stay here and wait for you. If you stay away long I will turn on the spring-latch and thus lock the door when I leave."

An evident fear seized upon the young physician. He was anxious to go to his suffering friend, and was unwilling to leave Agnes in his office. She saw all this very plainly.

"And, by the way, Frank," she resumed, "as I am very tired, I will go into the back room and rest on the lounge."

She started toward the door, pretending not to have noticed that it was locked, and tried to open it.

"Why, it is locked!" she exclaimed.

Armour's uneasiness had increased to positive suffering.

"Yes——" he stammered.

"Is any one in there?"

"Agnes——"

"Well?"

"You are acting in a strange and unaccountable way to-day."

"I?" she asked, in great astonishment. "I don't understand you, Frank." Then she walked straight up to him, and, placing her hands on his shoulders, said, with dignity and tenderness: "I merely asked you if there was any one in the room, and you are offended. Let us be candid with each other, Frank. What does it mean?"

"I may have a patient in that room, and——"

A low moaning in a woman's voice, indistinctly heard from the inner room, interrupted him. His face turned scarlet and then pale, and all the time the steady gaze of the surgeon's daughter was upon him. She took her hands from his shoulders, looking much humiliated; and, with a painful sadness which he had never before seen in her conduct, she simply said:

"I don't think it is customary for physicians to lock their patients up; but if I have been rude I beg you to forgive me. I will not annoy you by staying. Good-by, Frank."

She extended her hand, which he seized eagerly; but she quickly withdrew it and left the room. He followed her into the passageway.

"Agnes," he said, "you surely don't suspect that——" but she was fleeing down the stairs so rapidly that he could not finish the foolish sentence.

The girl went so quickly along the crowded street that people turned in wonder to look at her. Her eyes were filled with tears, her face was very pale, and her lips were tightly caught between her teeth. "I never would have dreamed it," she said to herself, over and over; "never, never, never! Oh, it will kill me, it will kill me!" She re-entered her home as secretly as she had left it, flung herself wearily upon her bed, and cried as though her heart were broken.

The police had gone intelligently to work upon the mystery of the shooting. Mr. Blanchard, the father of the wounded man, had arrived, overcome with grief and

horror. Dr. Armour, he said, was the only intimate friend his son had. He was entirely unable to suggest any cause for the shooting, which undoubtedly had not been done with a suicidal hand. The police repeated to him all that they could remember of the disjointed and unintelligible conversation between his son and Agnes Osborne, and this account puzzled him sorely. What mysterious bond was there between his son and this young woman? She had denied all knowledge of him, and yet she gave the information of his identity. When and how had he been her friend, not knowing her? Why had she discovered an anxiety that he should not blame her for the deed that would cost him his life? Why was she desirous of learning from him whether Frank Armour knew anything about the tragedy? Who was this that was madly in love with Armour, and what possible connection could there be between this fact and that of the shooting? Who was the woman referred to in their conversation, and why should Armour keep her in hiding? How could her jealousy of young Blanchard be the moving cause of the desperate assault?

Mr. Blanchard was not the only one who tried to bring some light out of the darkness of all this singular and deplorable transaction. A broken-hearted girl, tossing and weeping on her bed, asked herself these questions, or some of them, many times, and the police were weighing them with all the care and precision of trained hunters of crime. With Dr. Osborne the matter was far more serious than with the police. Lacking his knowledge that the young man's temporary restoration to a state of consciousness was not explainable on ordinary grounds, they did not see the true value of the fact. Dr. Osborne reasoned that a wound of that character must necessarily produce a disorganization of the mental functions and present a condition of unconsciousness. This had been the case until his daughter had inserted her finger far into the wound, when at once the sufferer's face brightened and a condition resembling consciousness ensued. Dr. Osborne was too wise to assume that young Blanchard's ability to speak and apparently carry forward a conversation was positive evidence of consciousness, for he knew that the

vagaries of a disorganized mind are of unimaginable variety. But this case was unique—nothing in the books or his experience had a suggestion of its form or color. The whole case was this: His daughter had betrayed fright upon seeing the wounded man at the station, but had recovered from that; and, indeed, her condition might have been construed as one of natural repugnance, overcome by an intelligent direction of the will. It was clear enough so far. When she placed her finger in the edge of the wound there was sign neither of recognition on her part nor consciousness on his; it was only when she had pushed her finger into the brain that those two facts came into existence. This appeared to the surgeon to be a very strange coincidence. Not only was the young man apparently restored to consciousness, but the two, supposed to have been strangers, recognized each other, and, worse than all else, betrayed a certain ill-defined common knowledge of the crime. All these things threw Dr. Osborne into the most conflicting surmises and brought him into a condition of positive unhappiness. The extraordinary scientific features of the case were overshadowed by his anxieties. His daughter had engaged herself, with his assent, to marry Dr. Armour, and yet this young physician had been placed in a peculiar light by the words of the dying man. Prolonged thinking brought only wider distraction, and the unhappy father determined to question his daughter, depending on the close sympathy between them to bring the whole truth from her.

It was some time, however, before he could find the opportunity. Mr. Blanchard had removed his son to his home and had retained Dr. Osborne to attend him. When the surgeon had done all that was possible, he went to his home and sought his daughter. But she could not be found. After nearly crying her heart out upon her return from Armour's office, she got up, brought herself under control, and then realized that she had been treated shamefully by the man whom she loved above all others in the world. It was easy for her grief to become shame and her shame anger. It was not possible for her yet to think seriously upon any plan that might bring suffering or ruin to her lover,

but it was within her power to work serious mischief to some mysterious woman who had come between her and him, and this was a matter to be attended to. Accordingly she cleared up her face, made herself very bright and pretty, and went at once to consult the chief of police.

That officer was much surprised to see her. He had been given a full report of the scene at the receiving hospital, and when he saw the girl enter his office looking so bright, confident, and handsome, and announce her name and mission, he was sorely perplexed. In truth, Chief Holloway had certain ideas which would have given Miss Agnes discomfort if she had known of their existence.

"I have come to ask you, Mr. Holloway," she said, "if you have made any discoveries concerning the shooting of Mr. Blanchard."

The officer, somewhat taken aback by her directness, tried, after a heavy fashion, to cover his position under some remarks in which discretion was outlined as a duty. "But this is rather a singular question from you, Miss Osborne, considering that you yourself are supposed to know all about the matter."

The very boldness and brutality of the assault served an excellent purpose; for the girl, not dreaming that her talk with young Blanchard had taken wings, or that any one suspected her of knowledge, was shocked with surprise.

"What makes you think that?" she quickly asked.

This put him in command of the situation, for he felt his power.

"Your conversation with young Blanchard showed that both you and he knew all about it; and then, after you left him you went to see Dr. Armour, who also appears to be pretty badly mixed up in the whole affair."

All this came like a whirlwind, and badly frightened the girl.

"Now," resumed Holloway, "although you have come ostensibly to make inquiries, I think your ultimate purpose was to give some very important information. I should be pleased to hear it."

Agnes caught her breath. "How can I know any-

thing?" she asked, realizing that her time had come, but with a rush that unnerved her. "Mr. Blanchard spoke in a rambling way."

"But he was not as evasive as you are at this moment."

"Evasive? Really, sir——"

"This is no time for by-play," sternly interrupted the officer. "No doubt you understand that you yourself are in a very peculiar position. If what you know would endanger your own safety by your telling it, I can easily understand your feelings."

The sting was felt, but the girl rallied and gave this opinion:

"You said something just now that makes me think you suspect Dr. Armour of having a guilty knowledge of the affair. If you mean by that to charge him with the crime, you are entirely in error."

"But you are careful not to deny that he knows something of importance. Why do you not say openly that you and Armour know who fired the shot, and that you two, possibly for prudential reasons, are doing all you can to conceal your knowledge and shield the criminal?"

The very brutality and directness of the question roused the inmost nature of the girl. With scarlet face and flashing eyes she said:

"If you will come with me I will show you the murderer."

This was a windfall that Holloway had not dared to hope for. He promptly followed Agnes. When they had reached the street she said:

"It will be necessary to see Dr. Armour first, and I think he is at Mr. Blanchard's. We will go there first."

"As you please."

They found both Dr. Armour and Dr. Osborne at the young man's house. Agnes felt so guilty that she could not bear to look Armour full in the face. She felt that a wild jealousy had led her to take a desperate and dangerous step, the end of which she could not foresee. But did her lover really deserve to be spared? Had he not deceived her shamefully? The young man felt that a high barrier had come between him and Agnes, and hence he had nothing to say to her. Hol-

loway readily saw that a heavy constraint rested upon them both, and it appeared, in his eyes, an important affair.

"Agnes," said her father, taking her by the hand and looking her anxiously in the eyes, "where have you been?"

"To see Mr. Holloway, father."

"For what purpose?"

"To learn if he had discovered anything."

This was not the place for pressing the matter, and so her father asked no more questions. There was a moment of general embarrassment among the four persons in the room, and it was broken by the chief, who asked that in the cause of justice Miss Osborne be permitted to repeat the experiment of inserting her finger in the wound. With surprising alacrity both the physicians objected, saying that the wound had been dressed, that the sufferer was then very low from shock, and that such an experiment would likely have a fatal issue. Holloway smiled in a peculiar manner, and, looking steadily at Armour, he added:

"I hardly expected that *you* would consent."

This thrust cut the young man to the quick, and he shot a look at Agnes that revealed his suspicion of her hand in the policy of the officer.

"Of course I have no desire to increase the young man's danger," remarked Holloway; "but the result of the former experiment was so important that I deemed it advisable to repeat it if possible. However, I think it is hardly necessary. As soon as I had learned all the particulars of that experiment, I laid them before a prominent physician of this city, and requested his written opinion concerning them. I think this is the proper time to inform you concerning it, for several reasons, which will appear later."

Thereupon Holloway read an ingenious paper, only a short extract from which can be set forth here. It is as follows:

"Admitting a wide latitude for deception on the part of the young woman and the possibility of error in your account, the whole affair seems preposterous and not worthy of serious attention. But we shall treat it, not as a fact, but as a hypothetical case." (The

hypothesis was here stated in agreement with the reported facts, and this explanation followed:) "The bullet was small, and hence the laceration of the brain matter was not extensive nor the primary shock very great. The unconsciousness observed apparently resulted from the severing of the nerves ramifying throughout the brain and from the rupturing of the innumerable chains of brain-cells in the path of the bullet. These lacerations, by destroying the continuity of the brain texture, disorganized the mind by interrupting the co-ordination of its functions.

"If, now, some plan could have been devised for bringing together the severed ends of tissue, there is a bare possibility that its employment would have restored consciousness. By a very singular accident, the young woman may have performed that service when she inserted her finger deep into the brain; but in order for this result to have been accomplished, a most extraordinary series of events must have occurred.

"The finger is a sensitive member, from the fact that it contains so large a number of nerves. These nerves terminate under a thin cuticle, through which sensation is easily experienced. When her finger was inserted in the brain tissue, her nerve-ends came approximately in contact with the severed nerves of the brain over the entire field of laceration. Thus the mechanical condition of nerve-continuity was restored in the brain of the wounded man, and consciousness was the result.

"But it is evident that the molecular transmission did not occur directly through her finger. That was not possible, for the reason that her nerves do not run straight through her finger from one side to the other. If we should trace one of these nerves, we should find that, starting at the termination in the finger, it runs up the arm into the brain. A sensation starting from the end and going to the brain would there meet and be assimilated by a large number of other sensations, this being the result of co-ordination. The brain would then decide what action to take, and then would direct the outrunning nerves to move the muscles with a definite purpose. It is clear, then, that the movement of sensation through the wounded man's brain tissue,

after the restoration of continuity, must have become communicated to the nervous system of the woman. In other words, no sensation could pass through his brain without passing through hers also. In this way their two brains would act largely as one, and the active thoughts of one would be known to the other. By this sort of reasoning we may account for the fact that although the two persons were strangers to each other, mutual recognition came when the knowledge of both became the possession of each. Hence we must infer that the young woman knows as much concerning the person who did the shooting as does the wounded man himself."

The effect of this extraordinary document can hardly be imagined. From Dr. Osborne it lifted a load that was likely to crush him. But why had not his daughter been candid with him? Now that there no longer could be a fair suspicion that she had any criminal association with the crime, why had she acted in so strange a manner?

Armour's thoughts took a very different turn. His pallor increased until it became alarming and his knees were unsteady from weakness. The man's agony was so painfully visible that Agnes felt a fearful dread for the end that must come.

The immediate result of all this was that the three men fixed a steady gaze upon her, in which was a commingling of peculiar motives and sensations.

"Miss Osborne," finally said Holloway, "this scientific report leads us to believe that you are fully aware of the identity of the one who fired the shot. In corroboration of these conclusions, you have confessed your knowledge by offering your services to point out the murderer to me. Will you be so kind now as to keep your promise?"

All that was womanly in the girl found cause both for alarm and encouragement in this situation. Against her sense of wrong weighed that of tenderness and affection. She found courage to look Armour squarely in the face, hoping to receive some sign that might guide her; but she found—as she read his expression—only contempt and defiance struggling through the cloud of anguish which sat upon him.

"I will keep my promise," she said with much firmness. "We will now go to Dr. Armour's office."

Besides becoming somewhat more rigid, as though bracing himself to meet some fearful ordeal, Armour betrayed no emotion. Dr. Osborne appeared to be overcome with astonishment and anxiety. Chief Holloway only smiled.

These four went at once to Armour's office in utter silence, each feeling the imminence of a catastrophe. The young physician admitted them into the outer room and then closed the door. With great abruptness he then asked this question:

"Will some one be kind enough to explain the object of this visitation?"

Holloway was on the point of speaking, but Agnes stepped before him, and, looking Armour firmly in the face, said:

"I believe that the person who committed this crime is concealed in your consultation-room. If I am wrong, heaven will punish me as I deserve. So far as I am able to discover, no reason exists why I should pretend to deny the knowledge which I have. The murderer is a woman, and you are concealing and shielding her in that room."

Armour, though pale as death, did not flinch before this accusation. On the contrary, his chest expanded, his eyes flashed, and with head thrown back he said:

"It *was* a woman who did the shooting, as I now believe, and it is true that she at this moment is kept in concealment by me in my inner office. I had hoped to be able to conceal her act from the world, for if ever there was an occasion for the exercise of the noblest human traits, it is in the case before us. Let me tell you something—you who mistake suspicion for skill in unearthing crime, and you who are moved by even less worthy motives—crime cannot exist in the absence of accountability. Has it occurred to you to imagine that this woman may not have been responsible for her act? Do you know what an epileptic is? Surely *you* do, Dr. Osborne. You are familiar with the strange forms which this disease may take. You know that the sweetest natures are at times wholly perverted by it; that its manifestations are complex and obscure;

that sometimes, instead of the violent spasms with which we are all familiar, the malady takes the form of mental and physical activity, in which we find an impulse to commit extraordinary acts as the result of monstrous misconceptions. When this condition occurs, all the principles of the victim's nature may be wholly eclipsed, conscience entirely suppressed, and the power to discriminate between right and wrong completely lost. After the attack has passed, there remains no recollection of what was done during its continuance.

"I inform you—and I am able to prove my assertion —that the woman who shot my dearest friend is now in my inner office; that she came to me from a distant city only yesterday to be treated for this very malady; that very soon after her arrival I informed her, as was my duty and pleasure, that I was engaged to marry a very charming and kind-hearted young lady. It is a breach of delicate confidence on my part to inform you that, in spite of a brave effort to appear glad for my good fortune, she could not conceal a certain unhappiness which I know was perfectly natural, but it is my duty now to tell you everything. I now know that the sorrow which my news caused her brought on an attack of what is known as masked epilepsy, to which she is subject. The thing uppermost in her mind was that some one was dearer to me than she was; although normally a woman of unexampled sweetness and goodness, she determined, in her condition of temporary insanity, to kill that person. I need not inform you that she must have started out with the clear purpose of killing the young lady to whom I was affianced. But she knew, also, that young Blanchard was my nearest friend, and in her wild mental condition she happened to find him first, and she fired into his brain the bullet that was intended for another."

The young man paused awhile, but he did not cast a glance at Agnes, who, feeling unaccountably faint as these strange revelations were made, had sunk helpless upon a chair.

"Mr. Holloway," resumed Armour, "I ask your promise that you will not arrest this woman now, but that you take proper steps to verify my assertions; and

as she has recovered from her attack and has no recollection whatever of the tragedy, you say nothing to her about it now, and that you never mention it to a soul if you find that what I have told you is true."

"I cheerfully give those two promises," said Holloway.

"Then," said Armour, "I will present the lady to you."

With that he went to the door of the inner room, unlocked it, and stepped within. In the next moment he returned, supporting on his arm a pale, sweet-faced, beautiful woman of fifty, in whose sad and gentle face was no trace of the fearful thing she had done. Armour, with his head thrown back and glowing with all the pride of a gentleman, thus presented her:

"Miss Osborne and gentlemen, I have the honor to make you acquainted with my mother."

A love story which is so old-fashioned as to end happily; one of Rudyard Kipling's India romances.

CUPID'S ARROWS.

ONCE upon a time there lived at Simla a very pretty girl, the daughter of a poor but honest district and sessions judge. She was a good girl, but could not help knowing her power and using it. Her mamma was very anxious about her daughter's future, as all good mammas should be.

When a man is a commissioner and a bachelor, and has the right of wearing open-work jam-tart jewels in gold and enamel on his clothes, and of going through a door before every one except a member of council, a lieutenant-governor or a viceroy, he is worth marrying. At least that is what ladies say. There was a commissioner in Simla in those days who was and wore and did all I have said. He was a plain man—an ugly man—the ugliest man in Asia, with two exceptions. His was a face to dream about and try to carve on a pipe-head afterward. His name was Saggott—Barr-Saggott—Anthony Barr-Saggott, and six letters to follow. Departmentally he was one of the best men the government of India owned; socially he was like a blandishing gorilla.

When he turned his attentions to Miss Beighton I believe that Mrs. Beighton wept with delight at the reward Providence had sent her in her old age.

Mr. Beighton held his tongue. He was an easy-going man.

Now, a commissioner is very rich. His pay is beyond the dreams of avarice—is so enormous that he can afford to save and scrape in a way that would almost discredit a member of council. Most commissioners are mean, but Barr-Saggott was an exception. He entertained royally, he horsed himself well, he gave dances, he was a power in the land, and he behaved as such.

Consider that everything I am writing of took place in an almost pre-historic era in the history of British India. Some folk may remember the years before lawn tennis was born, when we all played croquet. There

were seasons before that, if you will believe me, when even croquet had not been invented, and archery, which was revived in England in 1844, was as great a pest as lawn tennis is now. People talked learnedly about "holding" and "loosing," "steles," "reflexed bows," "56-pound bows," "backed" or "self-yew bows," as we talk about "rallies," "volleys," "smashes," "returns," and "16-ounce rackets."

Miss Beighton shot divinely over ladies' distance—sixty yards, that is—and was acknowledged the best lady archer in Simla. Men called her "Diana of Tara-Devi."

Barr-Saggott paid her great attention; and, as I have said, the heart of her mother was uplifted in consequence. Kitty Beighton took matters more calmly. It was pleasant to be singled out by a commissioner with letters after his name, and to fill the hearts of other girls with bad feelings. But there was no denying the fact that Barr-Saggott was phenomenally ugly, and all his attempts to adorn himself only made him more grotesque.

He was not christened "The Langur"—which means gray ape—for nothing. It was pleasant, Kitty thought, to have him at her feet, but it was better to escape from him and ride with the graceless Cubbon—the man in a dragoon regiment at Umballa—the boy with a handsome face and no prospects. Kitty liked Cubbon more than a little. He never pretended for a moment that he was anything less than head over heels in love with her; for he was an honest boy. So Kitty fled now and again from the stately wooings of Barr-Saggott to the company of young Cubbon, and was scolded by her mamma in consequence. "But, mother," she said, "Mr. Saggott is such—such a—is so fearfully ugly, you know!"

"My dear," said Mrs. Beighton piously, "we cannot be other than an all-ruling Providence has made us. Besides, you will take precedence of your own mother, you know. Think of that and be reasonable."

Then Kitty put up her little chin, and said irreverent things about precedence and commissioners and matrimony. Mr. Beighton rubbed the top of his head, for he was an easy-going man.

Late in the season, when he judged that the time was ripe, Barr-Saggott developed a plan which did great credit to his administrative powers. He arranged an archery tournament for ladies, with a most sumptuous diamond-studded bracelet as prize. He drew up his terms skillfully, and every one saw that the bracelet was a gift to Miss Beighton, the acceptance carrying with it the hand and the heart of the Commissioner.

All Simla was invited. There were beautifully-arranged tea-tables under the deodars at Annandale, where the grand stand is now; and alone in its glory, winking in the sun, sat the diamond bracelet in a blue velvet case. Miss Beighton was anxious—almost too anxious to compete. On the appointed afternoon all Simla rode down to Annandale to witness the judgment of Paris turned upside down. Kitty rode with young Cubbon, and it was easy to see that the boy was troubled in his mind. He must be held innocent of everything that followed. Kitty was pale and nervous, and looked long at the bracelet. Barr-Saggott was gorgeously dressed, and more hideous than ever.

Mrs. Beighton smiled condescendingly, as befitted the mother of a potential commissioneress, and the shooting began, all the world standing a semicircle as the ladies came out one after the other.

Nothing is so tedious as an archery competition. They shot, and they shot, and they kept on shooting till the sun left the valley and little breezes got up in the deodars, and people waited for Miss Beighton to shoot and win. Cubbon was at one horn of the semicircle round the shooters, and Barr-Saggott at the other. Miss Beighton was last on the list. The scoring had been weak, and the bracelet, plus Commissioner Bar-Saggott, was hers to a certainty.

The commissioner strung her bow with his own sacred hands. She stepped forward, looked at the bracelet, and her first arrow went true to a hair—full into the heart of the "gold"—counting nine points.

Young Cubbon on the left turned white, and his devil prompted Barr-Saggott to smile. Now, horses used to shy when Barr-Saggott smiled. Kitty saw that smile. She looked to her left front, gave an almost imperceptible nod to Cubbon, and went on shooting.

I wish I could describe the scene that followed. It was out of the ordinary and most improper. Miss Kitty fitted her arrows with immense deliberation, so that every one might see what she was doing. She was a perfect shot, and her forty-six pound bow suited her to a nicety. She pinned the wooden legs of the target with great care four successive times. She pinned the wooden top of the target once, and all the ladies looked at each other. Then she began some fancy shooting at the white, which if you hit it counts exactly one point. She put five arrows into the white.

It was wonderful archery; but, seeing that her business was to make "golds" and win the bracelet, Barr-Saggott turned a delicate green like young water-grass. Next she shot over the target twice, then wide to the left twice—always with the same deliberation—while a chilly hush fell over the company, and Mrs. Beighton took out her handkerchief. Then Kitty shot at the ground in front of the target and split several arrows. Then she made a red—or even points—just to show what she could do if she liked, and she finished up her amazing performance with some more fancy shooting at the target supports. Here is Miss Beighton's score as it was pricked off:

Gold.	Red.	Blue.	Black.	White.	Total Hits.	Total Score.
1	1	0	0	5	7	21

Barr-Saggott looked as if the last few arrow-heads had been driven into his legs instead of the target's, and the deep stillness was broken by a little snubby, mottled, half-grown girl saying in a shrill voice of triumph, "Then I've won!"

Mrs. Beighton did her best to bear up; but she wept in the presence of the people. No training could help her through such a disappointment. Kitty unstrung her bow with a vicious jerk, and went back to her place, while Barr-Saggott was trying to pretend that he enjoyed snapping the bracelet on the snubby girl's raw, red wrist. It was an awkward scene—most awkward. Every one tried to depart in a body and leave Kitty to the mercy of her mamma.

But Cubbon took her away instead, and—the rest is not worth printing.

A startling tragedy in a London ball-room. A love story of Russian political intrigue written for the *English Illustrated Magazine* by Sidney Pickering.

SONIA.

CHAPTER I.

MADAME REDINE was "at home" that evening, and a dozen or so of her friends were conversing and playing cards in her long, brightly-lighted *salon*. Sonia Redine, her youngest daughter, counted them over carefully and decided that they numbered sixteen in all.

"Only sixteen," she reflected a little contemptuously. Of all the sixteen guests, only one, in her opinion, was worthy of interest or notice. "And at our receptions in Vienna there were never less than thirty people!"

Captain Shapirof came there on the staff of the Governor-General Gourief, being both his nephew and his aide-de-camp. He was a tall, fair, finely-built man, with aquiline features and an air of distinction. Sonia had never seen a handsomer man, or one whose whole bearing and appearance so commanded her childish admiration. She was quite content to sit unnoticed on a sofa, sometimes turning, without looking at them, the leaves of a photograph book, and watching Shapirof as he sat talking to one of her mother's lady friends.

"I am sure he is very much bored," she thought, "though it is true he always looks like that, and that is why they call him arrogant and ill-mannered. Oh," with a little movement of dismay, "he cannot be going already!"

For the object of her interest had risen to his feet and was looking about him as if undecided. "Mother is talking so fast," thought Sonia, "he does not like to interrupt her. She is telling a story; I hope it will be a long one."

Captain Shapirof probably thought that his hostess's story might prove a long one; in any case, instead of

taking leave of her he turned and walked slowly across the room toward Sonia.

The little girl's heart beat fast, not with shyness, but with astonishment and delight; she was not shy, and had any other man in the room approached her, it would not have disturbed her self-possession. At fifteen she was already a pretty girl, fair-haired and gray-eyed, with a small, round face, childish, indefinite features, a complexion as delicate as a rose-leaf, and charming dimples.

Shapirof, pausing before her, looked down at her approvingly.

"Mademoiselle," he said, smiling, "why do you sit out here by yourself? Why are you so unsociable?"

Sonia's color came and went: "I know these people so little, monsieur; they are strangers to me as yet. I think it very dull, monsieur."

"Your mother and sister do not find it dull," he added.

A cloud came over Sonia's transparent childish face. "Mother has many friends here, and as for Irma, she would be happy anywhere provided she was near the Zotofs."

"Near Pierre Dimitrivitch, you mean?"

"Pierre and his sisters and brother, monsieur, and indeed I think their friends also would be necessary to her happiness, for she extends her affection to them."

"Who are their friends?" asked Shapirof carelessly.

Sonia enumerated a list of names for his benefit.

"Among all those young people, mademoiselle, you too will find some who are congenial to you."

But Sonia pursed up her lips and shook her curly head. "Apparently they all regard me as too young to be admitted to their friendship. If I come into the room when the Zotofs and their friends are here, they stop short in their conversation and look at one another, as much as to say, 'Remember this child; be careful what you say before her!' and yet Anna Zotof is only a year older than I am."

A few minutes later he took leave of the assembled company, with a bow and a smile to Sonia as he passed her on his way to the door.

"And they say he is conceited and arrogant," thought the girl. "What spiteful calumnies!"

How gentle and deferential his manner toward her had been! How sympathetically he had listened to her! She recalled with delight the expression of his eyes, and the tone in which he had asked to be included among her friends.

A hand laid on her shoulder roused her from these pleasant reflections; her elder sister was standing close beside her. Irma Redine was a tall, distinguished-looking girl of nineteen, and her face, if not regularly handsome, was singularly intelligent and attractive. "My dear," she said, smiling, "you and Captain Shapirof have been having quite a long conversation. What has the great man been saying to you?"

Her tone was a little elder-sisterly, and Sonia's color rose. "Have I to give an account of what people say to me?"

"Certainly not," answered Irma gently. "I beg your pardon, dearest, I did not mean to offend you. We are going to play games—will you come?" And Sonia, ashamed of her resentment, graciously consented.

It was nearly twelve o'clock; the lights had all been put out in Madame Redine's *salon*, and her latest guests were on their way home to bed.

Up-stairs, in the room which they shared together, her daughters arrayed in dressing-gowns were brushing their hair as they talked over the little incidents of the evening.

Sonia was now quite ready to speak of her *tête-à-tête* with Shapirof, in her eyes the most interesting incident of all, but Irma avoided any allusion to it.

"Who is that outside?" the latter asked presently, breaking off in the middle of a sentence. Some one was knocking softly at the bedroom door. Rising from her chair Irma opened it a little way, and then went out hastily into the passage, closing it behind her.

"Irma, Irma," called her sister, "who is it?"

No one answered, and the door Sonia tried in vain to open, since it was being firmly held on the outside. A low, murmured conversation was going on in the passage, and straining her ears she recognized with astonishment the voice of Pierre Zotof, Irma's *fiancé*.

"What strange behavior," thought Sonia, much scandalized. "Surely if there was something which he had forgotten to say to her, he might have written a note."

She had turned away from the door, but after a minute or two she returned to it, drawn by an irresistible curiosity; the murmur of voices had ceased, and this time the handle turned easily. Softly on tip-toe she stole down the passage, dimly lighted by a ray of moonlight which streamed in through an unshuttered window, and heard as she did so the shutting of the drawing-room door.

She paused a few yards from it, and waited. It opened five minutes later and Irma and Pierre Zotof, silent now, stood together on its threshold.

Turning with a sudden movement the young man took his *fiancée* in his arms, kissed her passionately, then pushing her away from him, hurried down the passage.

Sonia regretted bitterly that she had ever left her room. What would Irma think of her coming out to spy on them? Still she must know that her conduct required an explanation, and supported by the consciousness of this fact, she came forward out of the shadow to meet her. Neither showing nor expressing any surprise, Irma took her by the hand.

"Come back into our room," she said; "I have something to tell you."

By candlelight her face looked pale and drawn.

"Oh, what is it?" exclaimed Sonia, clinging to her.

"Darling, you must be calm and brave; what has happened may be a great misfortune, or again it may be nothing. The police are at the Zotofs' house. Petia heard it in time to come back and warn me. There are a few books and papers which I must burn at once, in case—in case they should come here."

"The police!" cried Sonia. "Oh, let us be quick!" Her teeth were chattering in her head, but rather with excitement than with fear, for she did not in the least understand either the nature or the extent of the danger at that moment hanging over them.

Irma took out from a drawer two paper-covered books and a small bundle of newspaper and manuscript, and explained that the stove in the drawing-

room where the fire was still burning would be the safest place in which to burn them.

By the light of one candle they stole into the *salon*, opened the door of the stove, and thrust the books and papers in among the glowing coals, Irma drawing a sigh of relief as they caught with a rush of flame.

Sonia glanced uneasily toward the dark corners of the long room. "And Petia and the others," she asked, "have they no books and papers?"

"Not where the police will find them," Irma answered. "Listen! They have come!"

In the street under the drawing-room windows there was a trampling of heavy feet, and presently an imperative knocking echoed through the silent house. When the police officer and his men entered the girls' bedroom, Sonia was sitting there alone brushing her long fair hair. In Madame Redine's room, which they had already visited, they had found that lady, her eldest daughter, and her maid; all three now followed them, and Sonia was a little reassured at the sight of her mother's face.

"What is your name?" the officer asked.

"Sophia Arcadievna Redine."

"Your age?"

"I was fifteen last August."

"You have lately returned from Vienna, where you spent three years?"

"That is so."

Turning away, the officer ordered his men to begin searching the room; then addressing Irma: "You," he said, "had better put your dress on."

Irma, outwardly composed as she had been throughout, opened a cupboard and took out a dark-colored dress.

Sonia would have gone to her, but the officer laid a hand upon her arm. "You are forbidden to hold communication with the person under arrest."

For the first time Sonia realized the blow which had already fallen, the suffering which had yet to come. A low cry broke from her.

"O Irma, Irma!"

Irma looked at her with imploring eyes.

"Sonia, for my sake be silent."

And for her sake both mother and sister kept silence when the cruel moment of parting came, kept silence till the house door had shut and the noise of footsteps and carriage wheels had died away down the street. Madame Redine was sitting motionless, her face hidden in her hands; Sonia was kneeling beside her, white and dry-eyed. Only the maid, a Frenchwoman, sobbed hysterically till Madame Redine motioned to her to leave the room.

"Mother, mother!" cried Sonia, as soon as they were alone. "Tell me that she has done nothing! Tell me that they will let her come back to us! Tell me that she is not—has not——"

Madame Redine sat upright, her wan cheeks flushing. "She has done nothing, nothing! They only hoped, my Irma, my Petia, that the Tzar would one day grant us a parliament, a constitution, a free press —what do I know? My children, my poor children!"

"That is no crime," her daughter assured her eagerly. "Franz Deak, who was a great, good man, obtained a constitution for Hungary. I have seen his statue at Pesth."

Madame Redine broke into wild laughter.

"A statue! They will not give my children a statue, they will only give them a grave."

CHAPTER II.

The fading daylight of a winter's afternoon filtered dimly through a window high up in the wall, a small window at best and rendered almost incapable of admitting light by a species of awning made of tin, with which, like the other windows of the prison, it had been furnished by order of the Russian governor for the purpose of preventing the prisoners from communicating with one another by calling and dropping notes from window to window.

The cell inside was so narrow that there was hardly room to pass between the left-hand wall and the apology for a bed on which its solitary occupant was lying.

For hours Irma Redine had lain there silent and motionless, ever since the news had reached her that her mother's life was despaired of.

Ten or twelve young people had been arrested on the same night as Irma and the Zotofs, and their relations were allowed to visit them in the expectation that by their remonstrances and entreaties they might prevail on them to confess.

Irma's mother had spared her this additional suffering on the one occasion when she had visited the prison. The poor woman caught a chill while waiting for admission in the draughty prison yard; the chill brought on severe bronchitis, and congestion of the lungs set in a day or two later, and in the note which Irma was permitted to receive, Sonia wrote that the doctor who attended her gave no hope of her recovery.

The little cell was rapidly growing dark. Outside in the passage a sentinel tramped heavily to and fro. Presently he paused in his walk, and a sound of voices and a jingling of keys fell on Irma's ears. Not till she realized that some one was entering her cell did she sit up, pushing back the hair from her eyes. At this hour no visitors were admitted into the prison, but her visitor was a privileged person.

"Captain Shapirof!" the girl exclaimed.

She tried in vain to rise, for she was feeling weak and dizzy. The soldier who had accompanied Shapirof set down a lamp and withdrew.

Shapirof stood contemplating Irma with compassionate eyes; even he, though not sensitive or emotional, was shocked to see how a week's confinement, bad food, bad air, and wearing anxiety had told upon her physically.

"Irma Arcadievna, I have come here by the special grace and permission of my uncle the governor, to beg you to have some pity upon yourself and your unhappy family. Your mother, I deeply regret——"

"She is dying," said Irma hoarsely; "go away and leave me in peace."

But Shapirof did not go away, he only sighed and was silent for a moment.

"I have some news for you," he said at last; "one of your friends has confessed."

Irma started. "Confessed?" she said incredulously.

"Yes, she has given full particulars of the secret

society you have formed for spreading seditious opinions in the class to which you belong."

"A secret society?" said Irma, her pale cheeks flushing. "It is a lie. We have formed no such thing."

"Probably she has exaggerated the extent of your crime—instinctively or intentionally—from a desire for self-importance, for notoriety, as prisoners who confess often do. Thus you, who are known to have been a leader in the movement, and to exercise great influence over your friends, may, if you choose, confer on them an immense benefit by telling the exact truth."

The girl smiled bitterly. "You know as well as I do that they will believe the worst version."

"I can, on the contrary, assure you that with my uncle such will not be the case. He is already prejudiced in your favor, and on your speech or silence it will probably depend whether you are merely assigned definite places of residence, or whether you are condemned to penal servitude."

"Tell me, Vladimir Andreivitch, has Pierre Zotof been arrested?"

"At present," answered Shapirof, "he is still at large. Irma Arcadievna, because of my friendship for your mother and sister, I have done my very utmost in your favor; but my uncle cannot betray his trust. He cannot do more than empower me to order your release on condition that you tell all you know."

"How soon should I be released?"

"Directly you have made your confession, which I am empowered to receive. The order for your release is signed; I have it with me. My poor child," his voice softening, "will you persist in ruining your own life, in helping to ruin the lives of others? Think of your mother, who perhaps at this moment is calling for you in vain."

Once more silence reigned in the cell. Outside, the sentinel had resumed his monotonous tramp. Shapirof had turned toward the window, and Irma was sitting with bent head, her face hidden in her hands.

She tried to think calmly and realize her situation. Petia, since he had escaped so far, must surely have reached some place of safety. Her mother was dying. The doctor, Sonia had said, gave no hope of her re-

covery; but might not the sight of her beloved daughter rally her failing strength to make one more struggle for life? At least it would enable her to die in peace, knowing that her children were together, and that a secure and even a happy future might yet be in store for them. A vision of a happy future rose before her—a future for herself and Petia. She had no illusions as to the other future which awaited her; at its best or at its worst, that lot would be equally unendurable. Constitutionally delicate and brought up in luxury, administrative exile or penal servitude would only mean in her case a slower or a quicker death, and final separation from the man she loved. Her confession, should she make it, would injure no one; might, if Shapirof spoke the truth, benefit her friends as well as herself, and help to clear Petia's brother and sisters from a terrible accusation. And her mother lay even now between life and death, and, should she hesitate only a few minutes longer, it was possible that she might be too late.

She raised her head. "Vladimir Andreivitch!"

Shapirof turned at once.

"Swear to me on your honor," she continued, "that all you have said is true."

An angry light shone in Shapirof's blue eyes, but he answered with calm deliberation: "Irma Arcadievna, I swear to you on my honor that I have spoken the truth."

"Then," said the girl, "I will write a statement, and for God's sake let me do it quickly!"

CHAPTER III.

ANOTHER winter's afternoon was closing in. The snow had just ceased, and Sonia Redine, standing at the *salon* window, watched the few passers-by. A week had elapsed since Irma's release from prison, and the snow was lying thick on Madame Redine's grave. Her daughter's presence had only availed to make death easier for her, and she died the day after her return. On the same day Pierre Zotof was arrested.

For the present the two sisters were living on in their old home, chaperoned by Mademoiselle Bertin, the maid. Their sorrow had drawn them very close to-

gether, and obliterated the barrier which Sonia's long absence and the four years' difference in their ages had raised between them.

Irma was spending this dreary afternoon with Madame Zotof, whose two sons and two daughters (the youngest only sixteen) were at present awaiting their fate in prison; and Sonia, as she stood at the window, was longing impatiently for her return. Presently her face brightened. A sleigh had drawn up before the opposite house, and its occupant, a tall man in military great-coat, was standing talking to the driver. Sonia sighed regretfully as he turned away and the house door shut behind him. There had been a time when she thought of Shapirof with doubt and shrinking, and bitterly regretted that one brief conversation which had passed between them, for of all those friends of her sister's whose names she had mentioned to him, hardly one had escaped arrest. What a joy and relief it had been to learn that to him she owed her sister's safety; to know that he had risked his all-powerful uncle's displeasure by generously interceding for her and the other prisoners; to feel that her suspicions were an absurd chimera, and that the thoughtless words she had spoken could not have had the smallest share in determining the action of the police!

The dusk deepened into darkness; Shapirof came out of the opposite house and drove away down the street, and still Irma did not make her appearance, and Sonia's impatience became a restless anxiety. When at last her sister entered the room her heart sank at the sight of Irma's white set face. Madame Zotof was an invalid. The doctor who attended her, a man of liberal opinions, had contrived a system of communication with the political prisoners, and Irma had gone to Madame Zotof's expecting to hear some news of her *fiancé* and her friends. The news, Sonia feared, must have been bad news, but the eager questions which rose to her lips were checked by a significant frown from her sister, who was answering Mademoiselle Bertin's inquiries as to what had kept her out so late.

"I have been looking out of the window for the last two hours," said Sonia, "and have only seen Captain Shapirof, who was calling on Monsieur Sidoralski."

Irma rose abruptly and walked toward the door.

"You are going to take your things off?" called Mademoiselle Bertin.

"As you see," answered Sonia, following her sister.

After they had entered their room Irma locked the door behind her, and also the door of an adjoining sitting-room.

"One cannot be too careful," she remarked, still speaking in a harsh, expressionless voice, "particularly when Mademoiselle Bertin's curiosity has been roused."

"What is it, Irma? What have you heard?" cried Sonia. "Do not keep me in suspense any longer!"

"Sit down there," said Irma, pointing to a chair; and, her sister having mechanically obeyed her, she walked to the window and looked out.

"You must have guessed the reason why I was late," she said. "I waited for Lipogorski. He brought us neither letter nor message; one of the sentinels has been arrested with a letter in his possession, and for the present all communication is at an end."

She paused, but Sonia was silent; something told her that she had not heard the worst.

Irma turned suddenly and faced her.

"I saw that he had more to say, so I took my leave when he did, and once outside the door I implored him to hide nothing from me. We went into the room opposite, which was empty—Sonia—only one of the prisoners has confessed—only one!"

"What do you mean? What are you saying?"

"I say that only Irma Redine has disgraced her name and betrayed her friends, and sacrificed the man she would die for."

"And Shapirof?"

"He lied! he lied!" cried Irma wildly, "lied to persuade me to confess; lied to have the credit of persuading me; and they all know what I have done, and days and weeks may pass before they hear the real truth. Listen, Sonia, he *may never* hear it; he may die believing— O my God!" All her strength gave way and she clung to Sonia sobbing and trembling.

And then Sonia knew what it was to look on with an aching heart at the agony of the human being whom

she loved best in the world, and to know that no action or speech of hers could give her any help or comfort.

Mademoiselle Bertin's curiosity remained unsatisfied. At supper-time Sonia reappeared alone, and, after explaining that Irma had gone to bed with a headache, sat, speaking little and eating less, throughout the dreary meal.

She had in fact persuaded Irma to lie down on the bed, and on her return to the bedroom she found to her surprise that her sister had fallen asleep. Having placed the lamp behind a screen she lay down beside her, oppressed herself by the physical weariness which follows violent emotion.

As she lay very still in the semi-darkness her mind was full of wild plans for vengeance; Shapirof's crime, she determined, should not remain unavenged; she would go (as mothers and sisters went daily) to the governor's house and wait till the general and his aides-de-camp appeared, and then she would shoot Shapirof.

This evening for the first time she had repeated to Irma the conversation which had passed between her and Shapirof on the night of Madame Redine's last reception, and Irma, hard pressed, had owned with great reluctance that her sister's thoughtless answers might possibly have had some influence on her fate.

"The suspicions of the police were already roused," she had said. "The college spies were on the watch, and Boris Zotof's rooms have been twice searched in the last few weeks, because, we thought, of the recent disturbance at the university. Shapirof went straight to the general's after he left our house, he is certain to have repeated what you said, and the list of names you gave may have assisted them; but our arrests must have been already determined on."

Sonia failed to extract any comfort from that last contradictory assurance, and could only find some slight relief in thinking how she hated Shapirof, in fancying that he was standing before her and her fingers were closing on a trigger.

As time went on her thoughts became confused; other faces took the place of Shapirof's, faded into vague dreams and vanished, and she slept the sound sleep of a tired child. When she awoke she instinc-

tively put out her hand, and finding that Irma's place was vacant, roused herself and sat up.

The lamp was no longer behind a screen; it stood on a table in the middle of the room at which Irma Redine had been writing. Sleep, it seemed, had overtaken her before she had finished her work; she sat resting her folded arms upon the table and her bent head upon her arms, and made no movement when Sonia called to her. The room was filled with a faint, sickly smell.

"It is laudanum," thought Sonia, chilled by a sickening fear. In an instant she was at her sister's side. At Irma's elbow lay a letter sealed but not directed, and a scrap of paper on which a few words were scrawled. Sonia took the paper and read them.

"If I were to denounce Shapirof and give myself up to the police, I should only bring trouble upon you. Life is impossible for me. Dear little sister, you who love me cannot wish me to live."

"You who love me?" Sonia repeated, "cannot wish me to live!" What had happened? Why was she standing there? Why did not Irma look up?

With a cry she flung her arms round her, lifted her up, and straining her to her breast kissed her cold lips, imploring her to wake; and still, though no answer came, she could not realize that those lips were sealed in death. She placed her leaning back in the chair, and kneeled beside her.

"Irma, my darling, listen: I promise that I will kill him—I promise it . . . Oh, she is smiling, she hears me! Irma!"

And then nature had mercy on her, and she lost consciousness.

CHAPTER IV.

It was about five o'clock on a sunshiny June afternoon, and Hyde Park in London was crowded. Madame von Trotha and her niece Sonia Redine sat watching the ceaseless stream of carriages and passers-by with amused and interested eyes. The young man at Sonia's side was a little bored by the interest she displayed in what was to him a very ordinary and fa-

miliar spectacle, though he exerted himself to remember the names of the people who especially attracted her notice.

"In the Bois," said Sonia, "one thinks only of the dresses—but here, what a lot of pretty faces!"

"Are there?" asked Jack Carew absently.

Just then, as far as he was concerned, only one pretty girl existed—the girl beside him, and his look and tone so plainly expressed his hallucination that Sonia smiled.

Seven years had passed since Madame von Trotha took her niece away from Russia, seven years during which Sonia had not revisited her native country. At two-and-twenty she was outwardly very little changed from what she had been at fifteen; and no one hearing her laugh, and looking at her bright, childish face, would ever have guessed that a tragic sorrow had overshadowed her youth. Carew was under the impression that she was very young indeed, and attributed to her nationality the fact of her being so much more *piquante* and interesting than an English girl of the same age. Jack Carew himself was still young enough to be called by his lady friends "a nice boy." The said lady friends, whose society he had lately neglected, were growing apprehensive lest he might perhaps be caught by "that little green-eyed Russian;" and though they heard she had a good fortune, they decided that it would be "too absurd" for Jack to think of marrying at his time of life.

"It is very nice here," said Sonia. "I feel very happy; only I ought not to say so, for it is unlucky."

"Are you superstitious?" Carew asked.

"Of course I am; we Russians all are. Last night when I came into my room I found three candles burning; that upset me very much."

"What nonsense!" said Jack with a laugh. "What do three candles stand for?"

"Oh, it means something dreadful—perhaps that I shall be upset the next time I drive in a hansom and break my bones, and not be able to go to the Von Benders' ball."

"Would you be sorry to miss it?"

"Sorry? I should say so! The other balls I have been to were very nice, but this is the great occasion,

and I have kept my prettiest dress for it. Ought I to say dress or frock?"

Carew having given his opinion on this important point, listened with sympathetic interest to a description of the frock in question.

"White and pale green, and white lilac," he repeated; "it sounds awfully jolly."

Sonia had turned her head away, and he did not notice—no one noticed—how suddenly the smile had faded from her lips and the color from her face. She was staring fixedly at the nearest of two men who were strolling slowly past her, a fair, broad-shouldered, handsome man, and unmistakably a soldier.

"My dear," said Madame von Trotha, breaking off in her conversation with a gentleman who had stopped to speak to her—"my dear, that is our new military attaché, Colonel Shapirof. Isn't he a handsome man?"

Neither her niece nor Jack Carew, who was looking after Shapirof, made any response to her enthusiasm.

"Yes, he is handsome," said the former indifferently. As she spoke she shivered slightly.

"A goose is walking over your grave," said Carew; "there's a superstition for you. How do you contrive to shiver in this heat?"

"He is wonderfully little changed," thought Sonia, "in fact he is handsomer than ever. Seven years! they seemed long at the time, but now I feel as if it were yesterday. He will be at the Von Benders' ball. Will he know me?"

She looked at the handsome boyish face of the young man beside her. It seemed strange and unnatural that he should talk placidly on, fancying that she was still the light-hearted girl who had told him that she was very happy.

"Aunt," she said, "if we are to visit those friends of yours before dinner we ought to go back to our carriage."

CHAPTER V.

"It is impossible," said Sonia. "It can never be."

"You mean that you don't care for me," said Jack Carew. They had been sitting for some time in the

dimly-lit, flower-scented conservatory, while most of the Von Benders' guests were waltzing to the strains of the blue Hungarian band. When the music swelled, it penetrated even to the conservatory, and Carew will long remember the monotonous refrain of that waltz. To him it was a very bitter moment, as his voice and face plainly showed, and Sonia's outward indifference filled him with an angry despair.

Yet Sonia was deeply touched by his emotion, although she did not care for him, and hitherto his open admiration had merely gratified and amused her. He would make some other girl very happy, this honest, strong young Englishman—and at the thought of that other girl's happiness she realized what she was about to do, and the price which must be paid for doing it.

Hastily she drew a letter from her pocket. "I have written this for you," she said, holding it out to him. "There were many things I wished you to know, and when you have read it you will understand; only you must promise not to read it till the morning."

"It will be morning soon," he answered.

The fact of her having written the letter which he now took from her gave him fresh hope; the "things" she wished him to know of might be obstacles in the way of their marriage which a resolute man could overcome. Perhaps Sonia read his thoughts.

"I have never cared for any one," she said sadly, "and I never shall."

"Well, I can care enough for two," said Carew doggedly.

They had both risen, and Sonia now turned toward him; her eyes were dim with tears he did not see. "Say that you forgive me—forgive the pain——"

"I have nothing to forgive," he answered, his voice softening; "besides, I don't give up hope."

Surely, he thought, it was a good sign that she did not answer, and only said after a moment's silence, "It is the ninth dance—a lancers. I must go back and dance it."

In the ball-room three or four sets of lancers were gradually being formed.

Some people who had formed one at the end of tne room looked curiously at Sonia Redine as she stood

talking to her partner, a distinguished diplomat. The white dress with touches of pale green in it was a great success, but the large bouquet of white lilac which she had been carrying when she first arrived was lying forgotten beside her fan on the seat from which she had lately risen.

"Your little compatriot is a very pretty girl," remarked a lady whom her partner the diplomat, at Sonia's suggestion, had asked to be the opposite couple.

Her partner's glance, following the direction of hers, rested for a moment on the young girl's smiling face. "She has nothing but *beauté du diable*," he answered a little contemptuously.

The sight of Sonia's bouquet brought back to Colonel Shapirof a long-forgotten incident, an old story he did not care particularly to remember—an every-day common-place tragedy, and the part which he had played in it. He had remembered it once before that evening, when Mademoiselle Redine had passed him in a doorway, and her eyes for one instant had met his.

"Are we never going to begin?" asked Sonia impatiently. Almost as she spoke the band struck up, and turning round she found that Jack Carew was standing very near her, he and his partner being the nearest top couple in the set.

She was startled and distressed by this discovery, but very soon she forgot his presence—forgot that any one existed except herself and Shapirof.

Shapirof looked very handsome in his glittering aide-de-camp's uniform, on the breast of which hung several medals, for he had fought with distinction both in Turkey and on the eastern frontier. He was talking a good deal to his partner, and now and then he smiled complacently.

The top couples had performed their share of the first figure of the lancers; they had concluded it a little prematurely, and the other sets were still dancing, while the band crashed out the conclusion of a bar. Its final chord was never played that evening. A strange sound fell on the ears of the musicians, making them pause suddenly, making the dancers stand still in a huddled crowd—the sound of a shot.

For an instant no one spoke or moved, though the

people at the end of the room saw a sight they will never forget—saw Sonia Redine standing with a smoking revolver in her hand; saw Shapirof turn, throw up his arms, and stagger forward, falling almost at her feet. Before they could recover from their paralyzing horror, another shot rang out. Sonia had turned the muzzle of the revolver toward her own side and pulled the trigger.

There was a shriek from a hundred terrified women, and a rush of men to the end of the room. Jack Carew was kneeling on the floor holding the dying girl in his arms. Once her eyes opened, and his face was the last they ever saw on earth.

Is there any crime of which jealousy and disappointed love are not capable? Before you answer, read this story from the pen of Maurice Thompson.

FOR ISOBEL.

WHILE yet the public excitement ran high in connection with discoveries made when the old Bauderet house, on Bourbon Street, New Orleans, was torn down, I was told the story of Augustin Verot.

It was in the year 1839 that this young man, rich, gifted, and handsome, came to New Orleans to spend a winter with Charles Marot Bauderet, whose acquaintance he had formed in Paris. The two men were of the same age, and their tastes were similar. Verot had been captivated by Bauderet's wit, learning, and subtile personal charm. In turn, Bauderet's imagination was touched into singular activity and his sympathies borne away by Verot's magnetic genius.

It is rare indeed that two young men, poets both, find such an overmastering mutual interest flowing between them. Their friendship became at once a passion.

When Bauderet left Paris after a year's sojourn there, he exacted a promise from his new friend that he should come to New Orleans and spend some months with him. Thus it came about that early in the autumn of 1839 Verot arrived after a pleasant voyage, and took up his abode in the Bauderet mansion on Bourbon Street.

Charles Marot Bauderet, as some of my readers will remember, was a bachelor orphan, occupying the large, silent old house all alone, save that he was surrounded with many faithful slaves.

The house was a low, far-spreading, gloomy brick structure, whose immensely thick walls and small windows gave it a jail-like appearance. Vines clambered over it from base to roof, and it was embowered in dusky trees. Surrounding it was a high brick wall topped with a picketing of iron. The gates were massive, and closed with huge spring locks that could be

opened only from within. They were attended by statuesque keepers as black as night.

Bauderet was descended from a family of buccaneers. His wealth was the result of ancestral piracy, murder, and rapine. In the young man's blood burned the taint of unbridled passion, and in his brain a lawless imagination held high carousal. His poems were, like those of Poe, Baudelaire and Villon, suffused with something that suggested madness, but the young man showed no sign of an unsound mind. On the contrary, he was brilliantly, fascinatingly sane and logical in his conversation. He went little into society and entertained scarcely at all, in the general meaning of the word. A few friends, rarely more than one at a time, were admitted through his portentous-looking gates and into his luxurious twilight parlors and dusk-dim library. He was a connoisseur of wines, cigars, and old books; he smoked almost incessantly, rarely drank to excess, read mediæval poetry, and in his conversation was much given to advancing preposterously romantic theories touching almost all the relations of life.

When Verot arrived, Bauderet met him at the wharf with every outward show of irrepressible delight; but the young Parisian at once felt that some great change had taken place in his friend. At first he was inclined to fear that Bauderet was not sincere in his expressions of affectionate joy over his arrival; but soon enough the mystery was adequately explained. Bauderet was in love. His whole nature was absorbed in the new passion.

Mlle. Des Champs was the daughter of a retired planter, whose home was but a few steps from Bauderet's gate. Recently the poet had met her. To meet her was to love her, and now he could find room for no other thought. Isobel Des Champs was the subject of his most eloquent conversation, his strangely melodious poetry, his curiously brilliant sketches in water-colors.

Verot found Bauderet's house a very palace of enchantment; so vague and yet so effective were the impressions made by its rich tapestry, its massive mahogany furniture, its dim vistas of books and pictures, and its solemn silence. The young patrician Frenchman

had been accustomed to old houses, but here, in this city of the New World, his creole friend had given him the freedom of one that seemed filled with an antiquity far greater than the Roman buildings of France could boast of—even the most ruined in old Provence.

Bauderet was anxious to have Verot see Isobel Des Champs, and, of course, the young visitor, especially after Bauderet's eloquent description, felt quite willing to meet the beautiful girl. Nor was he in the least disappointed when he saw her; indeed, her loveliness so far surpassed expectation, so dwarfed all former visions of maidenly attractiveness, that Verot was struck to the heart by her first glance.

If Isobel captivated Verot, it was not a loss of love at first sight, for the handsome Parisian did not fail to impress her imagination in turn. From the moment of their first meeting they were ardent lovers, as everybody could plainly see, save only Bauderet. So lost in the infatuation of absolute devotion was he that he could see nothing but Isobel's dazzling beauty, could hear nothing but the rich, low music of her creole voice.

Soon enough Verot was in the seventh heaven of a successful courtship—not courtship, but love-telling and love-listening—while poor Bauderet went right on in blissful enjoyment of his imaginary lordship of Isobel's heart.

The autumn sped; the winter went like a dream, and out flashed the orange blooms, out poured the mocking-bird songs, heavily drooped the roses by the walls. The breezes from the gulf were sweet and fragrant; the sky was like a great pale violet tent shutting in the world with a wavering mist-dream of spring.

The time was approaching for Verot to depart for France, when one morning he informed Bauderet that he and Isobel were to be married, and would set sail within a fortnight to make Paris their home.

At first Bauderet was stupefied by the announcement. He gazed almost vacantly into his friend's eyes, while his face grew deadly white. Not a feature moved, however, nor did the quiet smile quite go from his firm, thin lips. It was an admirable exhibition of that self-control which in those days was so much cul-

tivated by gentlemen who were in the habit of settling all matters of personal disagreement at the point of sword or muzzle of pistol.

Of course Verot had counted the cost, and fully expected a duel, but he was pleasantly surprised to find that Bauderet would not demand a meeting. Furthermore, instead of appealing to the code, the host, who had been so cruelly robbed, took the turn of affairs with a philosophic resignation truly admirable. After the first great struggle against the terrible disappointment which the disaster to his hopes had brought, he drew close to his friend and wished him great joy.

Verot was both touched and awed by the strange change that came over Bauderet's face and manner. It was a slow, mysterious transformation of the man. His face took on an inscrutable mask of quiet, almost serene, resignation, behind which something suggested immeasurable depths of poignant suffering. In his eyes at times burned a light which startled Verot and haunted his dreams at night.

Love predominates everything, however, and the passionate young Parisian was so bewildered and blinded in the rose-mist of happiness that the deepest significance of Bauderet's conduct was entirely lost to him. He was aware of nothing much besides his impending nuptials, the tender glory of the semi-tropical spring-time, and the wild flutings of the lusty mocking-birds.

About this time, as is now known, Bauderet went frequently to see an old negress, a voudoo charm weaver, and procured from her a phial of hideous poison—a black liquid, thick, rank, frenzy-bearing—made from the heads of snakes, the tails of scorpions, and the roots of various deadly weeds all steeped together for many days. Among the African voudoo workers this liquid was known by an appellation which meant "brain burner." It was said to induce madness of the most hopeless kind. Its concoction was attended with the most solemnly horrible of rites and incantations.

It was the night before Isobel and Verot's wedding-day. Bauderet appeared to be in better spirits than usual; he had some rare old wine brought into the

library, and he and Verot sat up till late drinking and smoking, while they permitted themselves perfect freedom in conversation.

Although, as I have said, their tastes were similar, no two men could have been less alike in personal appearance than were Verot and Bauderet. The Parisian was tall, athletic, fair, with blue eyes and yellow, curling hair, while the creole was dark, slight, black-eyed, mysterious-looking, possessing the singular magnetism of a face at once handsome and inscrutable. Bauderet's slightness was not physical frailty, however, for he was a noted swordsman possessed of extraordinary nervous energy.

It was late in the night and the lamps were burning low, the flames flickering faintly and faltering in their brazen sockets among the pendent crystal brilliants, when Bauderet arose and said:

"Well, my dear old fellow, it is growing late, and you must not be drowsy on your wedding-morn. One more cigar—just one—the best that Cuba ever gave to the lips of man, and then to your dreams."

He fetched from a little hanging cabinet a small ivory box curiously carved and mounted in gold, out of which he took two large oscuros separately wrapped in silver-foil. One of these he handed to Verot, at the same time lighting the other.

"The last two of a priceless lot sent me two years ago by a friend at Havana," he said.

Verot daintily brushed the almost black cigar across his nose to inhale its fragrance, and instantly recoiled, for there came from it a strange, insinuating, and unbearable stench.

"That is nothing," laughed Bauderet, with a hollow, brutal ring in his voice that startled Verot. "When you light it the smell disappears, and the smoke is exquisitely fine. See!" and he puffed a light cloud toward his friend's nostrils. "Isn't that incomparable bouquet?"

Verot put the cigar between his teeth and tried to light it, but the thrill of atrocious evil that flashed through his nerves caused him to let it fall.

"It's horrible!" he exclaimed. "I can't bear it!"

"Oh, what womanish qualms!" remarked Bauderet,

almost testily, picking up the fallen oscuro and handing it to his guest. "Smoke it; this may be our last night together, and—and——"

Something in Bauderet's voice appealed to Verot's sympathy, while at the same time it made his heart almost sink. A man lying in his coffin, ready to be buried alive, might have had such a strain in his voice. His face was white, with that ghastliness which comes in extreme moments to a dark countenance, and his eyes, strangely dilated, burned with a dusky, deep-set brilliance.

"You know how I feel, Verot—you know how I feel."

Again the Parisian essayed to light the cigar; but the thing was not possible. He flung it aside after inhaling one intolerable draught of its smoke.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Bauderet. "You have less courage than I supposed; but then you Parisians, as I've often told you, are a degenerate set."

Verot had risen, and now stood towering above his host, his magnificent frame expanding and a determined look in his fine, fair face.

"That cigar was poisoned!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, surely not!" said Bauderet, with immediate concern, stooping and picking it up. He put it to his nose.

"Why, that is strange!" he cried.

"What can it mean?"

The two men looked steadily, searchingly into each other's eyes, and slowly but clearly read the whole situation. One was aware that his deadly purpose had been discovered; the other knew that death was lurking for him in every corner of that gloomy old house. Verot was the first to speak.

"How shall we settle this?" he demanded in a hard, dry tone.

Bauderet laughed sardonically and puffed lazily at his cigar, meantime shrugging his shoulders as if the matter were of light consequence to him. "I think the best way to settle it is to go to bed and sleep it off," he remarked, with a half-yawn.

"Scoundrel! villain! murderer!" exclaimed Verot, permitting for the moment his indignation to master him, "you shall answer to me now!"

"Oh, certainly, if you wish," said Bauderet calmly. "My sword-room is but a step from here. Follow me if you're not afraid."

Verot followed, but not without a strange sense of insecurity. It was as if some treachery were about to be sprung upon him at every step while they passed through two or three dim rooms and along a low, narrow passage between damp brick walls, then into a bare, windowless little room.

"See here," said Bauderet, stopping close to one of the dismal walls, "this doesn't look like a door, does it?"

He fumbled a moment about a certain spot, pressed a hidden spring, and pushed open a low shutter, disclosing another cell-like apartment, dank, grimy, and ill-smelling. Into this Verot followed him. They halted and faced each other, a little lamp carried by Bauderet lighting up the drawn and ghastly faces.

"We can settle our little trouble here without the slightest fear of being interrupted. This is where, as I have heard, one of my reckless kinsmen who formerly owned the house used to confine stolen slaves while he was awaiting a chance to run them off. Nobody living save myself knows that this room exists."

He smiled cynically, and lifting the lamp gazed around at the slime of the reeking bricks. Then he made a little petulant motion and said:

"The swords—the rapiers—I have forgotten them. Hold this lamp a moment, please!"

Verot mechanically accepted the proffered light; but as he did so something in Bauderet's look, or in his movement, put him on his guard, or rather startled him a little.

"You'll not be afraid to stand here a moment while I go fetch the swords, will you?"

He placed peculiar accent on the word "afraid," and Verot felt the blood tingle in response to the insinuation.

"You shall soon have your test of skill as well as of courage," he responded; "but if you are going back after weapons you'd better take the lamp. I can wait without it."

"This is not a pleasant waiting-room," sneered Bau-

deret, again letting his eyes slowly sweep the loathsome little cell.

He was still smoking the smouldering black cigar, and the pale rings of fragrance slowly strayed in the chill, damp air.

"Don't stand there like that," said Verot savagely, "or I'll stamp you into the floor."

"A coward would do that," retorted Bauderet, taking two or three light backward steps and pausing in the little doorway. "I have some doubts of your honor, or ought to have."

"Fetch the rapiers, sir," was all that Verot said. His terrible anger was mastering him.

Bauderet retreated one more step, then with a fiendish leer laid his hand on the heavy shutter.

"You command, but I shall take my own time to obey," he remarked in a tone of constrained excitement. "How should you like to wait in this little boudoir until your bride comes to you?"

Like a flash the meaning and the purpose of Bauderet's words and movements leaped through Verot's mind. Already the door was slowly swinging shut.

So frightful was the thought, with its infinite suggestions of horror, that the tall Parisian stood for a single moment paralyzed.

"Good-night forever, Augustin Verot. May your dreams be sweet," said Bauderet.

Slowly, steadily, the door, which was in reality a hinged section of the massive wall, swung round.

Verot let fall the lamp, which, clanging brazenly on the brick floor, remained sputtering and burning there with a strange, fantastic light. Something like a death-chill shivered through the air.

One long bound the Parisian made, uttering a low, harsh cry of rage and terror as he was caught between the closing door and the jaw of the doorway.

There was a struggle like the fighting of wild beasts, the men growling and panting in the extremity of their brutal straining and tearing.

Presently a body was heaved and flung. It fell in the centre of the cell and lay ghastly and motionless beside the fast-dying lamp-flame. Then the ponder-

ous door went to with a dull thump and a sharp click of the hidden spring.

One of the rivals stood on the outside of the cell panting and quivering, the white froth clotted on his lips; the other lay limp and lifeless within.

* * * * * *

The mystery which for nearly fifty years had hung over the Bauderet homestead was cleared up when the house was torn down. The laborers came in course of their work to a low, narrow hidden room, damp and repulsive, in the middle of which lay a skeleton clothed in rotten garments. This was the body of Charles Marot Bauderet, whose sudden disappearance about the time of the marriage of Isobel Des Champs to Augustin Verot had given rise to so many wild stories. In fact, so absolute had been the mystery that not the faintest clue to the missing man had ever been found until this revelation by the workmen divulged everything.

Immediately after the discovery of Bauderet's skeleton inquiry was begun as to the whereabouts of Verot, who was traced and found an old man, widowed and childless, penniless and friendless, on the island of Corsica. He told his story as I have told it to you, and, as if the relief from the long strain of his hideous secret had relaxed his whole being, he fell at once into a state of collapse, from which nothing could rally him. He died in his seventy-fourth year, muttering with almost his last breath:

"Isobel, Isobel, it was all for you! I gave him the grave he meant to give me. It was a close and silent tomb, but at last—at last—it—has—given—ah!—given up—its secret!"

"Wherever," said one of the Club at its last meeting, "American life touches the old Spanish life, there you can pick up stories on every side. Here is one. It is signed by Katharine Du Bois, and it comes from the *Overland Monthly*."

JUANA'S ORDEAL.

THE early morning sunshine tinged alike mountain and sea in the beautiful valley of Carpenteria, in Southern California. Juana walked slowly down the path that led from the kitchen door of the quaint house to the more sequestered barn. From here the path led on along the road, in and out among apricot and fig trees, until it stopped abruptly, as if quite worn out with its exertions, on the outskirts of the ranch.

Juana paused a moment, then gathering her skirts tightly in her left hand she began to climb the steep trail. She took it without languor or delay, her strong young figure moving upward with scarcely a pause for breath till she reached the top.

Here an old fence bounded the hill pasture belonging to Juana's father. She flung herself lightly against the bars of the gate to rest, and to gaze upon the scene spread out below.

On the east the long dusty road was flanked by ranches more or less cultivated. Here and there symmetrical rows of beans met the eye. Olive trees mingled with walnuts were scattered everywhere. Occasionally a red-tiled adobe relieved the monotony of open pasture lands and fields dotted with oaks and yellow with the blossoms of the golden mustard.

From the foot-hills rose precipitately the purple mountains, whose crests are often veiled with clouds of feathery mist. A fair land, and dear to the rancher's daughter from her babyhood—the place of her birth and of her people before her. Yet to any one else who had been there, the most picturesque thing would not have been the outspread landscape, but the young Spanish girl leaning on the worn gate to look at it.

She turned now, and began a series of low, coaxing

whistles, which presently brought her favorite mustang, Pedro, to the bars of the gate. The gate-posts were worn smooth by the rubbing of patient animals from the adjoining field, and had it not been for the friendly hay-rope about their rickety tops, Pedro would have surely knocked them down as he stretched his neck over the bars to be caressed by his mistress.

They were a pretty picture—the two. The blue-black hair of the girl made more vivid the ripe color in her olive-tinted cheeks. Her deep, lustrous eyes had in them that half-pained, half-pathetic expression peculiar to the eyes of the Spanish girls of the South. Yet Juana knew little of sorrow. The old rancher's only daughter, she had lived a petted life. She was a simple-hearted child, and whatever capacity for endurance or courage lay within her, it had never been tried.

After a series of vigorous pats, bestowed with many a cooing Spanish phrase of endearment upon her favorite, Juana produced a rosy apple from her pocket, which Pedro munched with evident satisfaction. She had not come to ask any service of him—only for a morning greeting; and now, after a lingering farewell pat or two, she left the pretty mustang looking over the gate after her, and turned to the steep walk again.

She stepped carefully, for fear of treading too heavily on the crumbling, sun-baked adobe and getting a tumble; her light feet made hardly a sound to be noticed among the noises of the country morning—Pedro's reluctant return from the gate to his grazing fellows, the other sounds from the pasture, the twittering of birds, the chirping of squirrels, the thousand-fold murmur and breath of the hour.

Half-way down, the light steps stopped suddenly, and the girl stood with a startled face, listening. Only a keen ear and a quick attention could have caught, above all those other noises, that singular and unusual one for such a place and time—the hiss of whispering voices. "Pablo"—her father's name—that was the one word she had caught, and half in curiosity, half in fear, she felt she must know why her father's whispered name should thus detach itself from the rustle of leaves to strike her ear and call her attention to the otherwise indistinguishable murmur going on in the little clump.

She leaned silently forward on the edge of the hazy screen of live-oaks, every nerve strained to catch the half-whispered, half-murmured words that rose from within. The screen, though it offered no perceptible barrier to sound, was quite dense enough to protect the girl from sight of the men who stood close together behind it, looking for no one in her direction.

"Pablo"—her father's name again, and now it came to her ear sharply, mingled with other words. "Stage" —"coin"—"arrest"—she caught; and then in an excited tone, which the others immediately hushed, "pistols."

She edged closer, listened more intensely, and her hearing seemed to become keener. She knew who the men were well enough—ranch hands of Pablo's, half-breeds, a vagabond set, who would do anything for money. But they were purposeless and dull, incapable of organizing and carrying out a plot to rob the stage of themselves. And the bolder rogue who planned and inspired the crime? The girl was left in no doubt of that—her own father's name was distinctly uttered, his directions repeated. That very night he and his confederates were to lie in wait for the stage that left Santa Barbara for Los Angeles at half-past seven o'clock.

Juana drew back, realizing that she must slip away undetected, yet too startled and horrified to think of anything else clearly. She was overcome by the sheer sense of her father's guilt. He was by no means an exemplary ranchman, Juana well knew. But she had no mother and had depended solely on him for care and tenderness, which he had given, at least in sufficient measure to win the response of a child's simple and uncriticising affection, and Juana was not far enough from childhood to have changed much in her feelings. Nor was the code of her people so exacting toward ordinary faults and ill-doings of men that what she knew of her father's had affected her with any strong feeling of shame, or given any serious shock to her regard for him.

But this was a different matter. The quiet, honest ranchers of Carpenteria were not of that class of Mexicans in whom a robber excites as much admiration as

censure, nor were these the times in which the native Californian easily excused robbery of the American intruder. Juana had been born and had grown up, peacefully and without thought of hostility, under American laws. The plot stood out in its reckless criminality, its shameless greed, before her as before any innocently-bred and honest-natured ranch-girl. As she crept carefully away, she was helplessly overwhelmed by the knowledge of his unworthiness of her love and respect.

But almost at once a reaction came, and a passionate resolution rose within her mind. It should not be! It had not happened yet—it should not. Some one must prevent it—yet there was no one but herself to do it.

By the time she stepped firmly once more upon the garden path, her mind was made up. She knew the uselessness of appeal to her father. She had no confidante among the women of the ranch to whom she dared to breathe such a secret. All the long, slow day it seemed eating her very soul out. All her sweet old-time confidence in her father was gone, and when from time to time, as was his demonstrative Spanish way with his pretty daughter, he drew her to him with caresses, she could respond with no joyousness.

At last the long day came to a close. The evening meal was ended; the after-supper work was done. Juana came out from the house into the broad porch, guitar in hand, crossed the porch quietly, and seated herself on the stone step, as she had sat before evening after evening. She sang the pretty Spanish airs she was accustomed to sing to her own accompaniment; and, though sometimes her voice grew very faint as the sick dread of what was before her swept across her mind, she persevered and with a heavy heart entertained the little household. They had all gathered upon the long porch, as was their evening custom; her father was wont to sit by her side smoking and listening, and now and then between his cigarettes making her happy with his easy phrases of praise. But this evening he soon rose and left her, joined the group of ranch hands in a dark corner of the doorway, and, under cover of Juana's songs, exchanged murmured question and answer with them.

The gray twilight deepened into night. Soon the moon arose over the eastern mountains, casting on everything such a flood of yellow light as only California knows. The sombre group in the corner had relapsed into a moody silence. Juana's guitar sank into her lap, and the hush was broken only by the sound of crickets and the cry from time to time of a night-hawk flying across the orchard.

The girl was watching the moon creep up the sky, and counting the minutes, as she had already counted them over and over during the day. Her breath caught in her throat, but she rose silently and carried her guitar into the house. As she passed her father she paused.

"The moon is so bright, father," she said, "I would go out for a little lope with Pedro."

She had been permitted more than once before to ride thus about the ranch lanes, or for a short distance along the safe neighboring road, on bright moonlight evenings. Indeed, her father had never interfered much with her movements, and their simple ranch life, not unaffected by American customs, was free from strict rules. Pablo nodded without removing his cigarette, and the girl passed on.

She put away her guitar, twisted a scarf over her head, and let herself out at the back door, carrying her bridle in her hand. A little relieved by the possibility of action and the removal of need for self-restraint, she hastened at a rapid pace up the path she had trodden early that morning, a light-hearted and unsuspecting child, to visit and pet her favorite.

She reached the old fence and whistled clearly across the moonlit pasture once and again, and presently Pedro came trotting to her. With trembling hands she undid the hay-rope and pushed open the sagging gate, and the little horse walked through, knowing well enough that she wanted him. She fastened the gate with mechanical care, then, putting one hand lightly on Pedro's mane, she quickly adjusted the bridle, scrambled to his back—she had been on Pedro's back without a saddle too often to waste time now in arranging any such adjunct—and started. In a few minutes she reached a road that skirted the base of the hill—then

leaning forward on Pedro's neck, she spoke to him and shook the bridle, and sent him flying down the road at his best speed.

Breathlessly the girl watched the trees fly by. The road followed the hills for half a mile before it struck a cross-road. Already, Juana knew the men were at their post below the spot where the stage-road touched her father's ranch. A fearless rider at all times, she seemed utterly so now, as without drawing rein she wheeled into the rough and imperfect old cross-road, and dashed down it. It was only used by teams in winter and was kept in no order, but the little mustang took his way swiftly and surely over the unyielding ruts of hardened adobe and half-buried bowlders.

After what seemed to Juana an interminable time, the reckless pair reached the dusty stage-road safely. Here they turned and cantered easily up the road to meet the oncoming stage, no sign of which yet appeared. Juana gazed eagerly before her, watching for the expected cloud of dust, but they had cantered on a mile and a half without adventure before it appeared, and Pedro came to a full stop to await it.

The dust moved down upon the waiting pair by the road side, and as it came near Juana saw that it inclosed not the stage, but only a Spanish family returning from a day's marketing in Santa Barbara. In the dusty moonlight they seemed almost weird in their picturesqueness. The whole family was in the long wagon, from the young woman in gay bonnet, down through ragged smaller members to the ugly little terrier—who, with his shrill bark and contradicting tail, is indispensable to the Spanish household.

The wagon toiled past, and Juana looked again up the road, from which the dust slowly cleared away. Her heart almost stopped beating as the fear shot across her that she had miscalculated the time. If she had missed the stage, by now her father was branded forever a criminal; their name was shamed, whether the world ever knew it or not. Suddenly she uttered a joyful exclamation, for around the bend in the road appeared the stage—unmistakable this time through the cloud of dust and loaded with people.

The driver reined in his horses suddenly at Juana's

violent gesticulations to stop—so suddenly, indeed, that they were dragged back upon their haunches—and stared with amazement at the girl and the horse. The passengers, startled at the abrupt stoppage, broke into questions and ejaculations as they recovered their balance, and leaned out to hear what was said.

Juana shrank back, abashed at so large an audience, yet she was too desperately set in her purpose to hesitate in her speech. In her fluent English, touched with the accent the child keeps who speaks another language at home, she poured out her story—not the real story, perhaps; Juana's ethical training did not include the absolute necessity of a rigid veracity—but one that served its purpose of warning as well, and gave the driver no room to suspect either her father or his ranch hands—all of them well-known characters in Carpenteria.

It made a profound sensation in the stage company. As soon as she ceased, one and another of the women cried out that they would not go past the ambush. They started to their feet, insisting that they be allowed to alight on the spot. The driver, who had no intention of staying where he was till morning, asked, none too politely, whether they wanted to stay there in the middle of the road while he went on and left them. Compelled by this counter-terror to remain in their seats, they clung to each other, interchanging their alarm and indignation, while the driver and the men among the passengers counted fire-arms and laid plans for defence should an attack be made. Finally at a crack of the long whip the horses started and the stage rolled away again down the road

Meanwhile, Juana had sat still upon her horse by the side of the road, understanding but little of the rapid confusion of talk going on in the stage. She had done her duty, and she knew that her business now was to get quickly and safely home. Yet she could not go without knowing how things turned out. She had not much fear of serious results now the driver was on his guard, for she knew a show of force and preparation would scatter the half-breeds; still less did she fear that any of the confederates would be captured amid their familiar fields, and exposed to the world.

Nevertheless, the misgiving that some one might possibly be hurt drew her on after the stage.

She cantered along behind it until it had passed an old walnut tree, not far beyond which was the place of ambush. Nearer to the concealed group of men than this tree she dared not go, for not a man standing concealed in the dark spot beyond would have failed to know at a glance the girlish figure on the familiar little mustang.

So she drew rein in the shadows of the walnut, and sat and watched the stage as it rapidly decreased the distance between itself and the fatal spot.

From the place where Pedro stood, unseen herself, she could clearly see that spot. She knew just where the men must be standing—just what their positions must be, Juan's, and Domingo's, and Sancho's—just what signal would be given, and what move would be made. The stage bore down upon the place—it was almost there—a sharp crack of the whip cleft the air and reached the girl's ears, and the stage lunged more swiftly forward into the shadow.

The girl leaned forward with strained eyes and ears. Would that sudden, resistless dash carry them past? Then came several quick, confused shouts, and then a pistol-shot, followed by a long, low cry of agony and despair. Then the stage stopped.

The moonlit air grew black to the girl, and she cried out herself with a piercing shriek, all thought of self-control lost in her passionate Spanish soul. She knew it was her father's voice, and even before the road cleared to her eyes, she shook the reins, and clung blindly to Pedro's back as he flew over the ground toward the huddle of stage and men.

The horse checked himself abruptly, trembling a little, as he came upon the excited group. The men who stood about something on the ground wheeled sharply to look as he dashed down upon them; they cast weird shadows in the clear moonlight as they stepped forward and stopped, recognizing the girl and looking at her with more amazement than before, as she slid down from the horse, and without paying any attention to them staggered across the moonlit space, dropped down beside the prostrate figure, and put her arms about it.

The old man lay stretched out in the dimness, between the moon and shadowed place of ambush, where they had carried him and laid him with his head on a loosely-rolled horse-blanket. His eyes were closed, and the blood trickled from a wound in his left shoulder, making an ugly red track in the soft white dust. The half-breeds were nowhere to be seen—they must have shrunk back and scattered away across the fields at the first sign of resistance. The men standing about drew away, half-respecting the girl's despair, half-eager to tell their story to the women who waited, frightened yet full of curiosity, in the stage. Only the driver stood close by, to enforce his claims on the robber's person, lest Juana should dispute them—understanding at once, now he had seen old Pablo's face, how much the girl had concealed, and guessing her relationship to the rancher.

Pablo was not dead. Juana looked up, and as she saw the man standing grimly by, it flashed across her what he was there for; and the whole sequence of prison and shame, crowded from her mind by the more imminent fear of death, rose up before her.

With a dry, tearless sob, and a passionate movement of despair she sprang up and flung herself before the man, breaking into wild pleading.

"Leave him with me!" she cried. "Leave him with me! You are safe—see, no one is the worse! Why must you take him? What good? Give him to me—do not convey him to prison. He is an old man. See his gray hair and the blood. He is hurt already—spare him! You shall have gold, all you want; there is no one but me, and I care not if there is nothing left for me; but leave my father."

The driver was not a hard man, and the girl's piteous voice and great pathetic eyes moved him: nor was he possessed of so rigid a sense of civic responsibility as to make him think that it was his duty to resist her. The gray hair that Juana appealed to brought to his mind his own gray-haired father. He looked at her and at the robber, and turning around left her kneeling in the dust and walked away without a word. A minute more, and the stage had resolved itself into a cloud of dust, fast disappearing down the dim stretch of road.

Appropriately enough, this tale of vengeance and death comes from the island which cradled Napoleon Bonaparte, and is written by a citizen of Bonaparte's adopted country—Guy de Maupassant.

A WIDOW'S VENDETTA.

THE widow of Paolo Saverini lived with her son in a poor little house on the ramparts of Bonifacio. The town, built on a spur of the mountain, seeming in places to hang suspended over the sea, faced, across a narrow channel that bristled with jagged rocks, the lower coast of Sardinia. At its feet, a cut in the cliff, like a gigantic corridor, leading between precipitious walls up almost to the first houses, serves as a port for the Italian Sardinian fishing-boats, and twice a month for the wheezy old steamer from Ajaccio.

On the white mountain side the group of houses make a spot yet more white. They look like the nests of wild birds, clinging to the rocks and looking down upon the terrible passage where few vessels dare venture. The wind ceaselessly lashes the waves and beats upon the rocks, which it has stripped of verdure. The patches of white foam above the black points of innumerable rocks that pierce the waves everywhere look like strips of cloth, floating and palpitating on the surface of the water.

The house of the widow Saverini, set upon the very edge of the cliff, has three windows that give upon the savage and desolate scene. She lived there alone, with her son Antoine and their dog Brisk, a big, gaunt brute, with long, shaggy hair, which accompanied Antoine on his hunting-trips.

One evening, after a dispute, Antoine Saverini was killed with a treacherous knife-thrust by Nicolas Ravolati, who fled that night to Sardinia.

When the old mother received the body of her son, which some neighbors brought to her, she did not cry, but remained for a long time staring at it motionless; then, extending her wrinkled hand above the corpse, she pledged to it the vendetta.

She wanted no neighbors to sit up with her, and shut herself up with her dead, keeping with her only the dog, which howled dolefully. Crouched at the foot of the bed, with its head toward its master's body and its tail pressed between its legs, the brute howled long and shrill, while the mother, leaning with fixed gaze over the corpse, wept silent tears.

The young man, lying on his back, his heavy cloth vest gaping and torn at the chest, seemed to be sleeping; but he was covered with blood—on his throat, on his trousers, on his face, on his hands. Clots of blood matted his hair and his beard.

The old woman began to speak. At the sound of her voice the dog was stilled.

"Go, go in peace. You shall be avenged, my little one, my boy. Sleep, sleep in peace. You shall be avenged, do you hear? Your mother promises it; and your mother always keeps her word, as you well know." And gently she leaned forward and pressed her cold lips to the dead face.

Then Brisk began to whine with a monotonous, heart-rending, terrible sound.

They remained thus, the woman and the dog, until morning.

Antoine Saverini was buried the next day, and soon his name was heard no more in Bonifacio.

He had left neither brothers nor near cousins. No man was there to take up the vendetta. The mother alone thought of it, day and night.

Across the strait she saw, from morning to night, a white spot on the coast. It was a little village, Longosardo, where the Corsican bandits took refuge when hard pressed. They were almost the only inhabitants of the hamlet, and there, in sight of their native land, they awaited the moment when they could return to Corsica. In this village she knew Nicolas Ravolati had hidden himself.

All day long would she sit alone by her window, brooding on her vengeance. How could she accomplish it, alone, infirm, almost at death's door? But she had promised, she had sworn on the dead body. She could not forget, she could not wait. What should she do? She no longer slept at night, she no longer

knew rest nor respite, she thought always, seeking a means. The dog slept at her feet, now and again raising its head to howl mournfully. Since its master was no longer there, it often howled thus, as if it would have called him, as if its brute's soul cherished a memory that nothing could efface.

But one night, as Brisk resumed his low howling, the mother had a sudden idea—the idea of a vindictive and ferocious savage. She mused over it till morning; then, rising before dawn, she betook herself to the church. She prayed, prostrate on the stone flags, imploring God to aid her, to sustain her, to give her poor worn body strength to avenge her son.

Then she returned. She had in her yard an old cask with the head knocked out, which served to catch the rain-water from the eaves. She turned it over, emptied it, secured it to the ground with stakes and stones; then she chained Brisk to it and went in-doors.

She walked up and down in her chamber ceaselessly now, gazing always at Sardinia. He was over there, the assassin.

The dog howled all through the day and all that night. In the morning, the old woman brought it water in a pan, but nothing more—not a bone, not a crust.

The day passed. Brisk, exhausted, slept. The next day its eyes shone, its hair bristled, and it tugged madly at its chain.

The old woman still gave it nothing to eat. The dog, become furious, bayed in a hoarse tone. And so the night passed.

Then, at break of day, the old woman went to a neighbor and borrowed a truss of straw. She then took some old garments, which her husband had worn, and stuffed them with straw to simulate a human body. Having driven a stake into the ground before Brisk's cask, she tied this manikin upon it so that it seemed to be standing up. Then she fashioned the head out of a bundle of old cloth.

The dog, surprised, looked at this man of straw and was silent, though devoured with hunger.

Then the old woman went to the butcher's and bought a long piece of sausage. Returning to her own house, she lit a fire near the dog-hut in the yard and

broiled the sausage. The dog, famished, bounded about and foamed at the mouth, its eyes fixed on the sausage, the fumes of which drove it almost mad.

Then the old woman made of this smoking sausage a cravat for the man of straw. She fastened it firmly around the neck, as if to make it part of the straw figure. When this was done she unchained the dog.

With a mighty bound the beast seized the manikin's throat, and, with its paws on its chest, began to rend it to pieces. It fell down, a bit of the prize in its jaws, then jumped again, forced its teeth into the cords, tore away some morsels of food, fell again, and leaped at it again ferociously. It carried away the face in great mouthfuls, rending it into strips with its sharp teeth.

The old woman mutely watched it all, her eyes blazing. Then she chained up the beast again, starved it for two days, and recommenced this strange exercise.

For three months she trained it to this sort of struggle, to this repast won only by its fangs. She no longer chained the beast, but with a gesture set it at the manikin. She finally taught it to tear it, to devour it, even though there was no food concealed in its throat. She gave it the sausage afterward as a reward.

As soon as the dog saw the manikin, it trembled, then turned to its mistress, who hissed "Go," pointing with her finger.

When she judged the time had come, the widow Saverini went to confession and communion one Sunday morning with ecstatic fervor, then, having assumed masculine garb, looking like a ragged old man, she made a bargain with a Sardinian fisherman, who took her, accompanied by her dog, to the other side of the strait.

She had a great piece of sausage in her bag. Brisk had been starved for two days. The old woman gave the beast a sniff of fragrant food every now and then to excite it.

They reached Longosardo. She went to a baker's shop and asked to be directed to Nicolas Ravolati. He had resumed his old trade of carpentering, and was at work alone in the back of his shop.

The old woman pushed open the door and called:

"Nicolas!"

He turned; then, loosing her dog, she cried:

"Go; eat, tear, devour!"

The famished animal sprang and seized the man's throat. The man threw out his arms, seized the dog, and rolled upon the ground. For some seconds he struggled, his feet striking the earth. Then he was still, while Brisk tore his throat to ribbons.

Two neighbors, seated at their door, recall perfectly having seen an old man go out with a half-starved dog, which, as it went, ate something dark which its master gave it.

At evening the old woman reached her home. She slept well that night.

Love, hate, desperate courage, despair, madness—all these are portrayed with a terrible vividness in this short story by Harold R. Vynne.

A SEVERED HAND.

It was while staying with my friend Tom Grantham at his father's parsonage in the quaint little town of Retford that I met the St. Cyrile girls. They were famous all the country over for their beauty; in fact, it is safe to say that no single family in Westmoreland, and perhaps in all England, contained the equals in physical loveliness of these three sisters. Their family was an old one, very old, and their grim, gray-headed old father was as proud as his lineage was lofty and his income scant. They were all blondes of the purest north of England type. Maud, the eldest, was the tallest of the three and a veritable queen in her manner and gait. Laura, the second, was almost as stately and had the same royal poise of the head as her elder sister. But it was Eunice, the youngest, a child of seventeen, who, to my mind, carried off the palm as the fairest of the three. The beauty of this English girl is quite beyond my power to describe. I was a mere boy myself at the time, only a year out of school; yet I distinctly remember the feeling of passionate adoration that beset me when I watched her standing in the high-backed St. Cyrile pew in the parish church the first Sunday evening. If ever mortal woman had the look of a saint, she had. Her yellow curls rippled far beneath her white straw hat upon her forehead; her great violet eyes were soft with a light that might betoken either religious fervor or peaceful thoughts on worldly matters. From her exquisite mouth came the words of the evening hymn, chanted in a fresh, childish voice. She was a picture that artists and poets would have raved over.

And it was of Eunice, with her soft cheeks of cream and rose, that my friend Tom was enamored.

He had left school three years before me, and was now a lieutenant in a regiment of hussars, but our friend-

ship had not been forgotten. Tom was the idol of his father and mother, and as handsome a young officer as any to be found in her Majesty's army. His beauty was quite the opposite from Eunice's. He was very tall and broad-shouldered for his twenty-three years, and had thick, coal-black eyebrows and hair. His face was as yet innocent of a mustache, but his resolute mouth and squarely-set jaws gave it all the manliness necessary.

I remember how bitterly I envied him when he slipped Eunice's arm into his own in the church porch and led the way toward the St. Cyrile mansion, while I followed with Maud and Laura, to whom I had previously been introduced. I defy the world to produce a handsomer pair than these two. Eunice's head reached scarcely to her lover's shoulder, and the bewitching, yet childishly innocent way she had of glancing up into his face would have lured a lifelong hermit from his solitude to woo her.

In the course of the three weeks I spent at Retford I had plenty of opportunities for observing how violent, how desperate, was my friend's passion. Indeed, he spoke to me of it often himself. Young as he was, his speech was that of a man who has made his cast for all that he values in life and is determined to abide by the issue. Boy though I might be, I could see that it was a case of life or death with him. Eunice's father, who was as prudent as most widowers are, had given a reluctant consent to their engagement (Tom's family was quite as patrician as his own), but insisted on an improvement in the young man's worldly position as a condition to the setting of the wedding-day. And how a poor lieutenant of hussars, and the son of a country parson at that, was to overcome that condition it was hard to perceive.

I had been a guest of the Granthams for about ten days when a visitor came to the St. Cyriles. He was a retired India merchant, with a saffron complexion and small, piercing eyes, but fabulously rich, so they said. He treated Tom and myself with quite evident condescension when we dined with the family a couple of days afterward. His name was Denton, and he talked of buying property in the neighborhood. From the

first moment I noticed his marked attention to Eunice, and I could not help shuddering at the sight of that evil face so close to hers. By Tom's pallor, too, I was aware that he felt as I did. It was a dismal dinner, and though the merchant ate enormously, I do not think any of the rest of us enjoyed it.

All through the next week Tom was taciturn and unsociable. He failed to rhapsodize to me about Eunice, and I felt instinctively that some evil was about to happen.

Shall I ever forget that night when she, whom my boyish fancy had pictured as a seraph, fell headlong from the pinnacle upon which I had placed her? I can see her now, as she stood, an hour before it happened, by Tom's side, looking up into his face with the smile of an angel out of heaven.

We are again dining at old St. Cyrile's. It was a farewell dinner, given in my honor, for I was to leave on the morrow. The party was gay enough, though the elderly Indian merchant (who, by the way, appeared to be on the closest terms of intimacy with the master of the house) appeared to still regard our presence as an intrusion.

The evening sped quickly. It was about ten o'clock. Maud and Laura were at the piano, busy with a duet, and Tom was turning their music. Without thinking where the others could be, I stepped out on the veranda and lighted a cigarette. It was a perfect night. The air was filled with the warmth of early summer, and the moon lit up the tops of the birch trees in the meadow beyond the garden, while far across the fields gleamed Allswater lake like a broad strip of silver.

Suddenly there came two figures pacing slowly across the lawn—Denton and Eunice. I gasped with astonishment, for the merchant's arm was about the girl's slim waist; and they walked so until they came close beneath the place where I stood, when they stopped. The wall behind me was covered with ivy and they could not see me; and just as I was about to make my presence known—oh, shame and confusion!—I saw the girl's snowy neck bend and her head droop down upon the stranger's shoulder. Then he took her face between his hands and kissed her on the mouth.

I barely repressed a cry, for at that instant I felt a hand grip my arm with the force of a vise, the fingers fairly sinking into my flesh. The pair on the lawn walked slowly around to another door of the house with arms about each other, as lovers walk, Eunice looking like a spirit in her clinging white dress. Then I turned and looked into the face of Tom Grantham, and the look of agony there I hope I shall never see again in the face of a human being.

When he returned to the drawing-room presently, Denton and Eunice were there. She was as fair and unruffled as the saint I had thought her. Denton held an envelope in his hand, which he handed to Tom. "A telegram for you, lieutenant," he said coldly. "I took it from a boy at the gate. Your father, it seems, sent it on here."

Tom took the telegram and read it. I marvelled at his composure. "The regiment is ordered to Africa," he said, and thrust the paper in his pocket.

Eunice gave a heart-breaking shriek and rushed upon him.

"How very unfortunate," observed Denton, with a perceptible sneer.

Grantham turned about and struck him to the floor with a blow of his fist. Then he strode from the room without a glance behind him. Eunice fainted. Her two sisters were too busy attending to her to notice me, and their father was nowhere to be seen. Feeling my presence unnecessary, I followed my friend just as the fallen merchant from India was preparing to rise.

How I came to be a passenger on the transfer that carried the —th Hussars from Plymouth does not matter much. The commercial house that commanded my valuable services had some affairs to settle at Cape Town, and as I was the only person in the office ready to volunteer for the mission, my offer was eagerly accepted. Though I was young, my employers were good enough to admit that I had brains. To settle this business was an easy matter, and having a taste for adventure, it was not difficult—everything considered, including a little distance—to seek out my friend Tom at the headquarters of his regiment. How he managed it I do not know, but when I obtained per-

mission to accompany the —th Hussars in the guise of a war correspondent, or anything else I might choose to call myself (on condition that I kept out of sight at the proper time and refrained from talking too much), I availed myself of the privilege with the ardor of a schoolboy let out for a holiday.

The campaign of the British against Cetewayo, the king of the region known as Zululand, has gone into history, and it is not my purpose to describe it—or justify it, either, for that matter. The part played by the —th Hussars was not a conspicuous one. Hard marches through a dreadful, rough country, with very little to eat and a broiling sky over our heads, were for long our sternest lot. On these long marches and in the quiet watches about the camp-fire my friend never once spoke of his great sorrow. From the tenor of his conversation, however, I could easily perceive that life had no charm left for him, and that he would welcome as a boon the chance bullet or assegai-thrust that should end it. His hair, too, was growing gray. Think of it—a soldier, three years out of school, and gray at twenty-four!

When we heard of the death of the Prince Imperial, the widowed Eugenie's only son, Tom sighed and said he envied him. When news reached us of the awful catastrophe of Rorke's Drift, where so many brave fellows went down, he gritted his teeth and vowed he would like to strike a blow for vengeance before the war was done.

The final battle of Ulundi, which was followed shortly afterward by the capture of Cetewayo and the termination of the war, was, as the historians have since told us, a most bloody affair. It was here that the —th performed its magnificent and almost only service of the campaign. Through the long afternoon the Zulu warriors fought with the superb ferocity that has marked them out as the heroes of all the savage tribes. Their superior numbers availed them little. Again and again, with dauntless bravery, they hurled themselves upon the British line, only to be slaughtered in masses by the murderous artillery fire. They were doomed and they knew it; but black and naked as they were, they swarmed to their fate and died like men.

But too many of her Majesty's soldiers were falling. The victory was being delayed too long. At last the —th received the coveted order to charge and put the black hordes to rout.

By some means or other a sort of fever had got into my blood. I did not ache to go into action, but certain smiles and witticisms exchanged by some of the officers in my hearing had produced a desire in me to show that though not a professional warrior hired to kill blackamoors at so much a day, I was not wholly without courage. This was why I had sidled dexterously upon my gray mare until I was within a few paces of Tom, who sat motionless in his saddle, calm as an icicle, with a red spot on each of his cheeks. I had pistols in my holsters and a good cavalry sabre in my hand, and when the trumpets sounded the charge and that superb body of horse went thundering over the plain, something seemed to snap in my head, and away I went, involuntarily, perhaps, but with an insane desire to take part in the fray. A couple of troopers, pierced through the breast with assegais, fell crashing from their saddles, and I came up with the advancing line at a furious gallop. In another instant we were in the mass of savages. In a sort of dream I saw a sea of fierce black faces about me. Some of the savages crouched under the bellies of the horses and disembowelled them as they were trampled underfoot. Others, giants in stature, stood straight up, with their brawny naked arms raised to heaven, and actually laughed as the troops cut them down. I saw Tom's face, set and stern, as he hewed about him like a templar of old, one hand gripping his bridle rein and in the other his deadly sabre rising aloft and falling to cleave a woolly skull. For myself, I suppose I was fighting like the rest. I was conscious only of a wild feeling of exhilaration—a sort of composed joy that I was a participator in such a matchless scene. I felt a spear-thrust that pierced the fleshy part of my arm above the elbow, and slashed mechanically at the head of the gigantic savage who had dealt me the wound.

And just as suddenly as the attack began the heroic foemen melted away. With loud cries they turned and fled. In all directions they scattered, leaving the dead

upon the field. The quick African dusk was stealing down as the trumpets sounded a retirement, and I drew rein with the rest. The battle of Ulundi was won and the Zulu war was over.

Many and many a gallant trooper lay prone upon the rank grass. Some were clasped in the embrace of the black foe with whom they had fought to the death. And as I paused, watching the flight of the vanquished enemy, there came upon me a most terrible apparition.

Lieutenant Grantham threw his charger back upon his haunches in front of me. His helmet was gone and his black hair disordered, while a thin stream of blood trickled down his cheek. "Ha!" he shrieked, "is it not glorious, this—this butchery? By G——, boy! it is the first thing I have found yet that could make me FORGET!"

I felt my hair rising on end, for I saw by the glare in the man's eyes that he was a maniac. And then (I can see the dreadful picture as I write) he slowly raised his left arm and I saw that his left hand had been almost severed at the wrist. It was hanging by a mere thread of flesh!

"See!" he screamed, as I tried to catch his bridle and lead him from the field; "see, my boy, they gave me as good as I brought"—holding the ghastly, blood-streaming hand aloft. "I am going now—forever. This hand has her ring upon it. I forgot to return it. Take it back to her and say I sent it!"

And with that the poor crazed wretch gave the maimed arm a violent, cruel swing, and the hand, with the ring upon the third finger, severed by the wrench, flew off and fell at my mare's hoofs on the blood-stained grass. With a wild yell he wheeled his charger and dashed headlong, all alone, after the fugitive black rabble. I tried to follow him, but, overcome by the awful sight and weakened, perhaps, by the loss of blood from the wound in my arm, I reeled and fell from my saddle to the ground.

For days afterward we searched for him. Dead or alive, he was never found. Was he captured or cut to pieces by the vanquished foe, or does he live to-day in the African forests among the savages, saved by his madness from a knowledge of his fate?

To England the report went back with the rest of the tragic list: "LIEUT. THOMAS GRANTHAM—MISSING."

In a quiet English village a white-haired clergyman and his wife wait in vain for the son who never comes back.

Mrs. Denton, they say, is quite the belle of the county, and her diamonds are the admiration and envy of all the countryside. It is a spiteful thought, but sometimes I wish I could have found that hand, with the diamond ring upon it, on the field of Ulundi, to bring back to her, as I was bidden.

A controversy was once raised in the Club as to whether real events told without exaggeration are as interesting as imaginary events told in the usual story-teller's way. Thereupon, to illustrate their side of the contention, the True-Story Party began to write and to collect many unadorned reports of real events, and this narrative of the hero of a fire, by Richard York, is one of them.

A MODERN ELIJAH.

He was small and black—a child of an inferior race. There was nothing in his appearance to suggest the hero, and if you had told him that he was a hero he would scarcely have known what you meant. An unschooled, illiterate, ugly, bullet-headed negro, he had, nevertheless, been baptized by the same spirit which had caused the face of St. Stephen to shine as the face of an angel.

One winter day—almost a year before the event which gave him a chance to show the stuff that was in him—he came into the hotel looking for a job. The office was brilliantly lighted and filled with a crowd of handsomely dressed men. There were politicians, club men, men about town, reporters, many members of the sporting fraternity, the usual loungers and hangers-on, an occasional hayseed—all forming a very startling background for the rags and filth of the poor shivering, half-starved little darkey. It was no easy matter for him to steer his course to the desk, and when he got there the splendor of the man behind it dazed him so that his voice almost failed him. He had, however, even at his early age, reached the point where he had to work or starve. So his necessities made him eloquent. His eloquence prevailed. He was, on the next day, placed on the pay-roll of the great hotel.

As a bell-boy he was not a success. I fear I must confess that he was lazy. People liked him—I do not know why, and for some reason or other he was a favorite with his employers. If he had not been they would have dismissed him before his first week was out. Instead of doing that, they concluded to find

more congenial work for him, so they put him in charge of one of the elevators.

Among the passengers who used to ride up and down with the boy was a little five-year-old girl, the daughter of a family living in the hotel. She was as perfect a type of her race as he was of his. With her fair white skin, golden hair, deep blue eyes, and pretty womanly ways, the child was a general favorite. Every one knew her; every one loved her. Between her and the boy a great friendship had sprung up. He was devotion itself, and his attentions to the little Caucasian were so grotesquely chivalrous as to be almost pathetic. She accepted them all with a dignity and grace that were charming. Her family lived on the top floor of the house, and as she always rode in his elevator when she could manage to do so, the boy and girl saw much of each other. Once she was ill. The medicine that helped her most was a wretched little bouquet sent her by her dusky friend.

It was winter again. The evening of which I write was very cold and clear. The stars were diamond-like in their brilliancy. Everything was frozen up—the wheels creaked on the snow.

The hotel was crowded with guests. Not more than two or three of the hundreds of rooms were unoccupied. A belated traveller who had been on a weather-bound train came in at one o'clock, tired and cold. He ordered a fire in his room and then went to the bar for a drink. A few minutes later he stepped into the boy's elevator and was carried to the top floor.

The great house was quiet. Most of the lights in the office had been extinguished. Two night-owls were talking in low tones on one of the settees which lined the walls of the lobby. The bell-boys were most of them asleep. The clerk was drowsing.

Two o'clock! The night-owls got up and walked out into the cold air. A drunken man poked his nose in the door. The sleeping porter seemed to scent him, for he hustled the poor fellow out.

The quiet deepened till it became almost oppressive. The air was heavy with it.

Suddenly, without a note of warning, the cry of "Fire!" rang through the house. There was life

enough now. Scantily-clad people were scurrying wildly through the smoke-filled corridors. They came plunging down the stairs to the office, and so out into the freezing night. Shrieks and curses and groans and prayers—it was Babel broken loose. All the bells in the house were ringing. The smoke grew denser. It seemed to come from everywhere—above and below. Great black volumes rolled through the long halls. Outside, the streets were jammed with people. The engines, with their clanging gongs, hurried to the scene. Ladders were raised and the work of rescue began.

It was time, for there was a white figure at almost every one of the multitudinous windows. The awful wall loomed up in the darkness story on story, dimly seen as to its upper half, for that part of it was wreathed in the blinding smoke. The smoke turned to flame —flame bursting through scores of windows. The terror-stricken creatures began to jump. The people in the street below were frantic.

"Back ! back !" they shrieked. "Wait ! we'll save you ! don't jump !"

Which is the pleasanter, to be roasted alive or to be mashed out of shape on the stone pavement ? If there is to be any saving done, it must be done quickly. Many people were busy saving themselves. The sleeping clerk and porter and bell-boys had gotten out.

But what of the little black fellow in the elevator ? He, too, had been asleep. He had been awakened as the others had been by the first cry of fire. Unlike them he had that "two-o'clock-in-the-morning courage" which Napoleon said was the rarest sort. In an instant he decided that it was his duty to stick to his post. And stick he did.

Up and down he went, and every time his car touched the office floor it was loaded with people. The journey was a frightful one, but he did not shrink. How long he could continue to make the trip he could not tell. The elevator might drop any minute. Very well, let it drop. Some of the people in it might survive the shock. It was sure to catch fire sooner or later. Even then he would be on the way to safety with his passengers. And at any rate he knew that

he could bring some people out of the fire burning above.

He had not been good at going up-stairs, but he could run his elevator. Trip after trip he made, each worse than the last. The firemen at the bottom of the shaft to whom he turned over his living freight sought to stop him in his dangerous work. The whole well was filled with smoke, and far up toward the roof the fire could be seen.

Still he kept on, and it did seem that every time he started skyward he was going to certain death. But he knew that the rooms and halls were swarming with people, and he would take any chance to save a life. The firemen were doing their best outside; death was busy within; and he finally made up his mind that it was no use to go back again, till all at once he remembered that he had seen nothing of his little friend.

Could he weather the storm and flame once more? He could try. He pulled the rope, and the journey began. It was slow—oh, how slow. The smoke was terrible—worse even than the fire—but he held his breath and fixed his mind upon the business in hand.

The flame kindled the woodwork of the car. He fell on his hands and knees—but he kept his hold on the rope. At last he reached *her* floor. He found her room, and found *her*. She was asleep and *alone*.

Wrapping her in the blankets and throwing about her a rug which he snatched from the floor, he struggled through the flame and smoke back to the burning car. "Back from the jaws of hell" it was that he brought her, fighting the fire away from her every inch of the way down. He had just strength enough to stop the car.

The children were taken out and carried to a drug store across the street—the girl alive and well and the boy seemingly dead.

He was horribly burned. Among the people who stood around were the parents of the little girl. They had been out to an evening party, and, returning after a long cold drive, found their home on fire. Every effort had been made, in response to the agonizing appeals of the father, to save the child—and now here she was, safe and sound, laughing in her mother's arms.

And the hero? He opened his eyes.

"Did I bring her froo all right?"

"Yes, yes," said the father, "and how can we ever thank you for what you have done?"

"Nebber min' 'bout dat, boss. Ef she's safe dat's 'nuff for me"—and he closed his eyes.

Dead? Yes, dead and gone to heaven in a chariot of fire.

How a Mississippi River gambler refused to win, showing an old love lurking in the memory even of a desperado.

HE WAS A GENTLEMAN.

MOORE, when I knew him, was a Mississippi River gambler. He travelled, in fact lived, on the big river steamboats. He never attempted to conceal the truth about himself. It was simply, "Gentlemen, I am a gambler by occupation, and a good one. If you care to have me play with you it will give me great pleasure. If you don't it doesn't make a particle of difference."

I got to know Moore very well, and I soon discovered that when playing with the average man, luck being equal, he would win ninety-nine times out of a hundred. I never touched cards, but I used to like his society. He was a wonderfully entertaining talker. On summer nights the steward used to serve dinner on deck for those who preferred to have it there. After dinner we'd go up to the hurricane deck, and when Moore was on board he would bring out his flute and play for us.

When the moon was out and threw a thin blue veil over the water, or when the boat carving the darkness swept so close to the shore that it rushed the dark willows on the bank, the rising and falling notes that came from his instrument were gentle music to the ear. I never knew him to propose a game of cards. He would play there until some one suggested a game, when he would take his instrument apart and put it away in an indifferent manner.

I watched him at play one night when Satan seemed to throw every card to this calm, self-possessed man. There was a cool, matter-of-fact way about him which froze the ardor of every one else except a young man about twenty-five years old. This player was in ill-luck, but with a flushed face and feverish eye he made his bets furiously, only to lose every time. It soon became evident that he was playing beyond his means.

Moore must have noticed it, for he ceased to bet heavily against the younger man. This angered the other.

There was a pot of three hundred dollars once, and every one had dropped out except Moore and the young man. Moore had been playing his hand like a wonderful automaton, passionless, but sure. No man except his opponent, perhaps, could doubt that he held the winning hand. Suddenly, when his rival bet fifty dollars Moore laid down his hand, saying, "I won't bet. I have nothing. You played that well."

The young man reached out feverishly for the pile of money, and then his hand lay on the table.

"That is not true," he said. "You have a good hand and you are afraid to play it against me."

Moore shot a hot glance across the table at him and two red spots flashed into his cheeks.

"I lay down my hand," he said slowly, but with a slight tremor in his voice.

"And I say," added the other in a lower tone, "that you are a gambler, and therefore a coward."

"Hush," I said, laying my hand on the young man's sleeve. "You don't know what you are saying. He is not a coward by any manner of means."

The young man shook off my hand vehemently.

"He is a coward," he repeated, "and I will answer for my words at the first landing."

I looked at Moore. I had seen him sit on the hurricane deck, a revolver in hand, and, as a waiter threw champagne bottles over the rail, raise his arm swiftly and shatter the falling glass with a bullet. There were graver stories, too, by far, about his deadly aim in duels. He sat stiff and motionless, with a terrible fire in his eyes. I was amazed at his next words.

"Does the game go on?" he asked quietly.

"Not with you," said the young man, bending forward, the veins in his forehead swelling. "Not until I prove that you are afraid to bet," and with a sudden motion he thrust his hand across the table and seized Moore's and turned the cards face upward on the table.

I was on my feet at that instant to arrest Moore's right arm, for I felt that he would draw his revolver at the insult. But a hush fell over those around the table,

and the hot-headed young man was gazing stupidly at the cards before him.

Four aces lay there—an invincible hand, for straights were not played. There was a blue tinge in Moore's white lips, and the young man looked bewildered and then burst into tears.

"We can't play together any more," he cried. "You threw money in my pocket because I was losing too much. I can't take it," he said, rising from his chair.

"You can," said the gambler, in an even voice. "I laid down my hand. The money is yours. Besides," he added, with a little shiver, "I held out an ace on you."

Every man at the table knew that Moore had lied. We all got up and left the young man sitting there before his money. I found Moore shortly afterward on deck, looking into the darkly-whirling water.

"Give me your hand," I said. "What in the world did you mean? You never cheated at cards in your life."

"Tut! tut!" he answered with a little laugh that was slightly harsh. "He is only a boy and I loved his mother once."

Stories of action—wherein men do something and do not spend their time in mere perplexity—stories of rapid motion as well as of heroic quality—of this kind is "Armstrong's Revenge," a narrative of railway adventure and love, from Chambers's *Journal*.

ARMSTRONG'S REVENGE.

ONE bright June morning, not many years ago, a big ungainly farm-servant, holding by a halter a large and uncouth plough horse, stood before the shut door of a battered wooden building, the surroundings of which at once proclaimed it to be a smithy, although through the chinks in its weather-beaten walls no forge-fire gleamed or cheery hammer rang. The ploughman, astonished to see the place shut at an hour long after that at which the blacksmith usually started work, retired a pace or two and gazed up at the chimney; and not seeing even the faintest trace of smoke issuing thence, he turned and looked about him with a puzzled expression on his face. A man breaking stones on the other side of the road, noticing the farm-servant's bewilderment, approached, and, after the usual morning salutation, proceeded to explain what had become of the blacksmith. We will give that explanation in our own words:

Hamilton Armstrong was the name of the blacksmith in question. His workshop was situated close to a wayside station on the main line of one of the great Scotch railways, but at a considerable distance from any town or village. Being, however, kept pretty busy at work for the neighboring farmers, and being consequently well-to-do, and having, moreover, as his nearest female neighbor a very pretty girl, the daughter of the porter at the station, it was the most natural thing in the world that he should wish to make her his wife. Unfortunately, this was more easily determined on than done, for he had a rival. This rival was the driver of a goods freight-train which was almost daily switched into the siding near Sarah's house, to allow of a passenger express passing, and he took advantage of this momentary respite to chat with the porter's daughter. Whether it

was because he was a far-away bird that his feathers seemed fairer than Armstrong's in Sarah's sight, or whether he was intrinsically a man of more worth, the gossips—for there were gossips even in those solitudes—were not agreed. Rightly or wrongly, however, Sarah gave him the preference.

Having made up his mind to ask Sarah to be his wife, Armstrong was not long in finding an opportunity for doing so. Though he knew he had a rival, he was hardly prepared to hear from Sarah that she had already promised to marry Duffy, the engine-driver. But Armstrong was not going to yield without making a special effort to win her. He pleaded long and fervently with her to retract her promise to his rival, whom he was persuaded she had only accepted because he had been the first to ask her. But Sarah was quite sincere, Duffy being really the man of her choice; and Armstrong pleaded in vain.

For the next week or two, the blacksmith moped about and did scarcely any work. On the day on which Sarah's marriage was to take place he left the smithy in the evening, and went wandering into the country, returning late at night. Next morning he went away again, now walking with uneasy step along the quiet country lanes and now sitting dejectedly by the roadside, muttering to himself. The neighbors soon came to hear of his strange behavior; and it was whispered that he must have gone out of his senses, as an uncle of his had done under a similar affliction.

"That was yesterday," the stone-breaker wound up, "and he's away along the road by the railway this morning. They should look after him, or he'll be lying down in front of some train, or jumping down into the deep rock cutting and breaking his neck."

If Hamilton Armstrong had not gone mad, as the people supposed, he certainly acted like a madman. Stung to the quick by his rejection, he had no heart for his work. He shut up his smithy, and went out to try to walk off the fever that burned within him. Proceeding along the path by the side of the railway, his heart filled with bitter hatred, the idea of taking a terrible revenge upon Duffy gradually shaped itself in his mind. At first he tried to shut his ears to the sugges-

tion of the tempter; but little by little he grew familiarized with the idea, until he got so demoralized that he began to think in a speculative way how he could best avenge himself upon the engine-driver. Duffy's train always passed the station, going east, about half-past seven in the evening. Shortly before it came the twenty-seven minutes past seven passenger train. The device of placing an obstruction on the line suggested itself, only to be immediately set aside. At this point in his meditations, the sound of a signal going down suggested to him the idea of tampering with the signals.

He returned home and retired to rest. Tossing restlessly on his bed, he was revolving in his mind his various schemes of revenge, when a diabolical idea struck him of a plan whereby he would be able to accomplish his object without leaving any trace of foul play, so that the whole blame of the catastrophe would fall upon Duffy, who would not survive to tell his side of the story, or even if he did and asserted his innocence, would not be believed. Armstrong noticed that if the counter-weight at the bottom of the signal-post were lifted up, it would allow the signal-arm to go down, just as if it had been lowered by means of the lever in the signal-cabin, the wire between the cabin and the counter-weight remaining motionless all the time; while as soon as the counter-weight was lowered again, no trace would remain of the signal having been touched. By adopting this mode of lowering the signal, the objection to his last-mentioned plan would be done away with. The only danger would be that the switchman might notice that the signal was down; but that was not likely, as the lifting of the counter-weight would not affect the lever in the signal-box, and it was improbable that the signal-man's eyes would be drawn toward the signal when he was not either lowering it or pulling it up. This plan would enable Armstrong to get some distance away, and so prevent suspicion fastening upon him; and the fact of the signal being found all right afterward would preclude all possibility of a suspicion of the signal having been tampered with.

Armstrong had begun his speculations with the view only of discovering how he could be avenged on Duffy if he wished to avenge himself. The successful issue

of them in a plan securing at once death to his rival and immunity from detection to himself was the cause of his resolving to go further. Thus by imperceptible degrees he had been drawn into plotting murder.

In an almost gleesome mood he rose in the morning and hastened along the embankment to the signal which he proposed to use for his dreadful purpose. The signal stood at about the deepest part of a long rock cutting, and was planted on the slope of a small embankment above the cutting. An examination of the place satisfied Armstrong that the best plan to adopt would be to attach a long cord to the counter-weight and, taking the cord in his hand, to climb the signal-post, so as to command a long stretch of the line and be able to lower the signal-arm at the right moment; for to be a moment too soon or too late would be fatal to his plan.

His plan was now matured; but a long period of waiting elapsed before an opportunity for carrying it into effect presented itself. With the patience and perseverance of a wild animal waiting for its prey, he betook himself evening after evening to the signal by various roundabout routes, so as to insure that no one would know that he went to the same place every day, affixed his cord to the counter-weight, and waited—only to see the passenger train dash past without slackening speed and pass the distance-signal without stopping.

At length, when the days had shortened considerably, and thus rendered the evenings more suitable for the carrying out of his plan, as one evening he listened anxiously in the dusk to the sound of the approaching passenger train, a thrill of pleasure shot through him, for he noticed that it was slackening speed. Taking the cord in his hand, he climbed rapidly up the signal-post, and was overjoyed to find the passenger train stopping just on the station side of the distance-signal. Trembling with excitement, he turned in the direction whence the freight train would come and anxiously waited the sound of its approach. Several seconds, which to him seemed hours, elapsed before there was any sign of its approach. The passenger train, however, still stood at the distance-signal, throwing up long ob-

lique lines of light in the misty air. At length, with fluttering heart, he caught the faint sound of Duffy's train approaching, and soon the headlights, overshadowed by a cloud of steam, golden with the furnace-light, began to twinkle dimly, like stars at twilight, in the distance.

"Now or never," thought Armstrong, taking two or three turns of the cord round his hand. He then tugged lustily at the cord; but the counter-weight would not rise. With an oath he twisted his legs round the signal-post, passed the cord through the lattice-work a little above him, so as to obtain a better purchase, seized the cord with both hands, and pulled with all his might The weight yielded to this violent effort; the signal-arm descended. Armstrong's wild laugh of joy at the accomplishment of his nefarious purpose was almost immediately stifled by a cry of terror and pain. In his excitement he had forgotten that his head was immediately below the signal-arm, and his savage tug at the counter-weight had brought the signal-arm down upon his head with terrible and fatal force. His nerveless limbs loosened from the signal, and falling with a thud upon the sloping embankment, he was shot over the edge of the sheer precipice that formed one side of the rock cutting and landed upon the opposite line.

Meantime the freight train had entered the rock cutting. The signal-arm having been lowered until it was in line with the signal-post, and having been checked by the entanglement of the cord in the lattice-work when it had only returned half-way, stood at clear. But for this accident Armstrong's fiendish scheme would have been frustrated; for the support being taken away from the counter-weight it would have descended, and so elevated the signal again. And another, to gratify one man's jealousy and hatred and punish one man, a hundred innocent men and women in the passenger train were to be sacrificed.

As the freight train came on, rattling and roaring through the cutting, the engineer and fireman, all unconscious of the imminent peril in which they were, stood on the foot-plate watching the signals and the line in front of them. A glance at the signal, as he caught

sight of it, showed Duffy that it stood at clear. His eye then wandered downward toward the rails, when suddenly it was arrested by a dark object lying on the other line.

"That's surely a man lying on the up line, Tom," he remarked to his fireman.

"Good God, so it is!" cried Tom in great excitement.

Without another word the steam was shut off, the lever reversed, and the brake applied, for the two men knew that the up express was due in three minutes, and that if the man who was lying on the line—who might be unconscious through drink or through having fallen over—was left there, he must inevitably meet with a horrible death.

As the train stopped with a shock and a bumping of buffers and clanking of coupling-chains along its whole length, Duffy jumped down into the six-foot way with the engine-lamp in his hand. Bending over the huddled-up form, he held the light above the blood-covered face and peered into it. A few seconds elapsed before Duffy moved; and Tom, wondering why he knelt so long looking into the unconscious man's face, jumped down beside them and asked: "Is he dead, Duffy?"

"Yes," answered Duffy, raising his head as if he had just wakened out of a dream.

"Who is he?" continued Tom.

"Armstrong the smith."

At this moment the brakeman of the train came along to see what was wrong; and after Tom had explained the matter to him, they lifted the dead man and carried him to the van. Duffy and Tom then returned to the engine, and were just about to start the train to advance to the station and see what could be done with Armstrong, when Tom caught sight of some one running along the line with a lamp in his hand.

"What's up?" cried Duffy.

"Who can this be, and what can he be wanting?" asked Tom.

At this point the man with the lamp approached the engine; and when he had come within the light of the furnace, the two men recognized him as the signal-man.

"It's a blessing you noticed it!" he cried, panting with the exertion of running so fast.

"Noticed what?" both men on the engine exclaimed simultaneously.

"Something's wrong with the signal. It's standing at clear just now, and yet the lever's right for danger. I heard you passing it without slowing up, and then I noticed the signal was wrong. I'm glad you saw the train in front in time to pull up."

"Is there a train in front?" Duffy asked.

"There is. The 7:27 passenger's blocked there by a truck that went off the rails."

All at once the whole matter became clear to Duffy. Armstrong had been trying to wreck the train, and had apparently fallen down into the cutting when putting the finishing touches to this trap for his enemy. Although Duffy thought this perfectly plain, he did not breathe a word of his thoughts to those around him. Was not his enemy lying dead? He would let by-gones be by-gones.

"No, we didn't notice that," he said to the signal-man. "We stopped because we saw a man lying on the up line."

Here the signal-man climbed on to the engine, and the up express went thundering past, creating a miniature and momentary hurricane as it went.

"It's Armstrong the smith," added Duffy. "He's dead."

"Is that so?" the signal-man exclaimed, and then lapsed into silence, feeling unable to say anything appropriate to the circumstances.

"I'll go up with you and see what's wrong with the signal," Duffy said to the switchman after a pause.

Reaching the signal, they found the cord, loosened it from the trellis-work of the signal-post, and let the counter-weight fall again. It had not suggested itself to the signal-man that any connection existed between the dead man on the line and the mysteriously-lowered signal; but in spite of Duffy's reticence, the cause of the accident became perfectly apparent to him when he saw the cord attached to the signal counter-weight, and put that fact and the fact of Armstrong's being found dead on the line together.

"If ever anything was providential," said the signal-man, as he and Duffy returned to resume their respective duties, "this is. Here's a man that intends to wreck your train; he falls over the embankment just when he gets the thing arranged; then you come on seemingly to a certain smash, when you happen to see his body on the line, pull up just in the nick of time, and are saved."

The signal-man had not probed the matter to the bottom; for the exact purpose of the cord had not occurred to him any more than it had to Duffy. Duffy was pained at the signal-man's discovery of the crime, and said nothing.

When they had reached the train and the signal-man had told his version of the story to Tom and the brakeman, Duffy, who had stood aside while the story was being narrated, approached the men and said: "Now, lads, you know what Armstrong was trying to do, and why he did it; but that's no reason why anybody else should know. We'll not say a word about the signal; but when we take back the corpse, we'll say that we found him dead on the line, and that he had seemingly fallen over the embankment down into the deep rock cutting, and been killed."

The three men solemnly promised to do this, and in spite of the post-mortem examination, in the report on which considerable stress was laid upon the peculiar nature of the wound upon the scalp, and the procurator-fiscal's inquiry, no one ever elicited more from these men than Duffy that night allowed them to tell.

Strangest fact of all, the engine-driver has never told his wife; that is the only secret he has from her.

A rather startling delusion, and all the result of star-gazing. A story told in the Chicago *Journal* by Austyn Granville.

HIS NATAL STAR.

My name is Jules Bertraud. I have lived in Paris all my life. It is the first time that I have ever been in conflict with the police—the first time I have ever been arrested. As my sanity has been called in question, and you, Monsieur Barbierre, justly distinguished as an advocate, have kindly undertaken to defend me, I send you this truthful history of the circumstances which have led to my being thus imprisoned as a lunatic.

I have purposely applied to you to conduct my defence, as you are not alone learned in the law; but have spent, like myself, whole nights in studying the complex systems of the stars, which but yesterday were under my feet, and to-night, as I write this in my gloomy cell, shine so brightly overhead.

Perhaps you may have never noticed a small star of about the thirtieth magnitude, which, on very clear nights and with a powerful telescope, may be discovered almost midway between the constellations of the Pleiades and Ursa Major. It is the comparatively insignificant star called Perigo. It has a Portuguese name, an ominous one, signifying "peril," "hazard," "jeopardy." It is my natal star. Born under its direful influence, I have been subjected to it ever since. My father, who was, as you know, a celebrated astronomer, has calculated that its orbit is so vast that it takes it nearly fifty years to complete it. His last words to me were: "Beware of Perigo when in perihelion. It will then possess its greatest power over you for evil. What effect it may have upon you at that time it is impossible to surmise; something, however, tells me that it will materially change not only your mental but your physical being."

That warning was uttered fifteen years ago. I have never forgotten it. Pursuing, like my father, the study of astronomy, I was enabled to watch through the long

nights the steady, irresistible approach of that fateful star which was to have such an influence upon my destiny.

You are well aware how I have struggled against it. Sometimes I have dreaded that it would tempt me to the commission of some fearful crime. Dwelling on this, what wonder if my mind should have assumed a morbid cast? But I am not insane.

I could confide in no one. You, the successful advocate, and I, the obscure astronomer, had not then been linked in the bonds of friendship through our simultaneous discovery of a new planet. My wife's relatives, ever on the watch to secure some pretext for her separation from a man who brought her but little fortune, I could not trust. Even from my wife herself I concealed my growing, appalling apprehensions. It is perilous to confide a secret to woman.

Two weeks ago I insensibly became aware of the near approach of my natal star to that great centre of the solar system which ordinary men call the sun, but which to us is merely one of many planets around which systems of far greater immensity than ours revolve. It was then that I set myself to a calculation of the exact time when, in accordance with the inexorable laws of nature, the star Perigo would attain its perihelion with the sun of our system. A long series of calculations had assured me of the fact that at or about midnight of the 17th of October, Perigo would be in the zenith.

A prey to the profoundest apprehensions, I at ten o'clock that night bade my wife good-night, and, stooping over the cradle of our youngest-born, imprinted upon its forehead what I thought might be perhaps my farewell kiss. I then shut myself in my study, closed the door tightly, and sat down to wait, unaided and alone, the coming of the fateful moment.

To divert my mind as much as possible from thoughts of the impending disaster which I felt certain was about to overwhelm me, I plunged at once into the solution of a problem which had already caused me many sleepless nights. While thus engaged, overcome with fatigue of watching, I sank into a profound slumber. I dreamed that I had been suddenly taken very sick;

that physicians had been called in; that I had died and had been stretched out upon a board for the purposes of an autopsy. The hardness of the bed upon which I had thus been laid disturbed my slumbers. I awoke, rubbed my eyes, and sat up. I did not at first realize where I was, or the extraordinary things which had happened to me. I looked around. It was the same room in which I had gone to sleep. The paper on the wall was the same, to the very pattern. But the room had been stripped of furniture, even to the carpet, and the floor had been whitewashed. How long had I been asleep? I stood up and walked to the window. I had left the top of it open for ventilation. My study, as you know, is a very lofty room. Whoever had divested it of furniture had also closed the window at the top. To compensate for this he had opened it at the bottom. I leaned over the sill and looked out. The stars were shining far away below me; yet the noises of the street, which are never absent in Paris, no matter how late the hour, fell distinctly upon my ear. Again I glanced below, completely mystified. There, shining in the azure depths, were the silver, twinkling stars, the familiar companions of my vigils. The earth seemed to have melted beneath my feet.

A dreadful feeling now took possession of me. Trembling violently, I fell upon my knees upon the hard, whitewashed floor and prayed fervently. I shut my eyes to keep out the horrid visions which oppressed me. Was I going mad? By degrees I became calmer. I opened my eyes and cast them heavenward, and the next moment had sprung to my feet again, staggering back, open-mouthed, wild-eyed, appalled. Above me, not forty feet away, was the pavement of the street in which I resided. Upon its stony surface men and women walked, head downward, in the air, and vehicles of all kinds passed by me in a singular procession, the quadrupeds engaged in drawing them appearing like flies on an exaggerated ceiling.

Still I did not comprehend. While my mental faculties remained unimpaired, my brain was slow to appreciate the marvellous change which had taken place in my physical constitution. It was not until I withdrew my head from the window and glanced upward that I

began, faintly at first, but soon with all the intensity of my being, to realize the prodigious thing which had happened to me.

On the ceiling of the room, all the furniture of the apartment was arrayed precisely as I had left it two hours before when I had fallen asleep. There was the desk with the inkstand into which I had dipped my pen. There was my heavy arm-chair, my stove, a ponderous weight, which I wondered did not fall and crush me; my bookcase filled with books. Amazed, I looked at all these things. Even the cat slumbered on the hearth rug. How did she do it, seemingly holding on to nothing, in a chamber which had been literally turned upside down?

Then suddenly an awful thought flashed across me. Instinctively I pulled out my watch, holding it open in my hand. To my amazement it slipped from me and like a balloon rose to the level of my chin. I caught it and pulled it down. It was just at the strike of midnight.

It was the fateful hour. Perigo was in perihelion.

Brought under its tremendous influence, the pitiful attraction of the earth had been easily overcome. What my father had dreaded and dimly foreseen had come to pass. Henceforth I was released from the influence of the earth. The gravity of Perigo, in my single instance, was all-powerful. Like a flash the real state of the case darted through my mind. I, not the earth, nor the house upon the earth, nor the room within that house, but I, Jules Bertraud, was walking upside down.

My soul was seized with a sudden panic. Rapidly I walked up and down the ceiling. As I moved, coins, keys, and various articles fell rattling from my pockets. A five-franc silver piece struck against the lamp. If it had broken it I could not have descended to extinguish the flames. Heat ascends. It was stifling where I was, notwithstanding the open window, near which, indeed, now realizing the awful influence of the star, I did not dare to venture, fearing that a false step might precipitate me into those tremendous depths that, like a fathomless ocean, gleamed beneath me.

I took off my coat and laid it upon the whitewashed

floor. The moment I took my hands from it it arose rapidly and struck against the carpeted ceiling. The cat woke up and ran and nested in it. I cried "Shush! Shush!" It looked up or down—whichever is right—and ran under the desk, fearful lest I might fall and crush it. I, on my part, stood staring stupidly and wondering why it did not fall into my outstretched arms.

I experienced no unpleasant consequences, physically, from my novel situation. My body, however, seemed to have grown much lighter. It seemed as if I could not weigh more than fifty pounds. My blood flowed naturally in its channels. I was feverish, but that was from the heat of the chamber. I leaned out of the window and felt the cool breeze upon my fevered cheek. I gazed again into the eternal depths below. There, midway between the Bear and the Pleiades, was my natal star. I had but to leap from the window to be carried at once toward it. Of what interest I might be to science if I could reach it! But I should never return, or if I did, it would be when Perigo had passed its perihelion and then I should be hurled back to earth a shapeless, indistinguishable mass.

I became seized with a sudden desire to leave my study. I walked over to the door, but it was far above my head. The transom, however, was open; by a desperate spring I reached it, drew myself up easily, and crawled through. Arrived on the other side, I hung for a moment by my hands and then let go. It would have been dark but for the moon, whose mellow light came through the glass roof of a covered passageway against which I had dropped. Had I been of normal weight I must have crushed through, and then nothing could have saved me; but as it was, the thick glass roof of the passageway easily sustained me.

I was moved by an indefinable instinct to go forward. You may think it was a curious journey, thus to be wandering around one's own house upside down, walking along the ceilings; but the world to me was upside down, and the only thing that appeared to me to be at all ridiculous was the fact that the earth, the houses, and the people in them were all upside down. I wondered how the people could breathe, and why those

houses, horses, and carriages did not detach themselves and fall into the deep abyss.

I reached the end of the hall and passed out on to the ceiling of the stairs. I worked myself down to the wall of the staircase, looking up every now and then at the pattern of the carpets. I crossed the hall, stumbling against the chandelier. Several of the crystals were detached and fell to the pavement with a loud crash.

Pierre, the butler, who always sleeps in the little room to the right of the hall, woke up and came out, candle in hand, rubbing his eyes sleepily. I trembled with fear, and dared not move while he went through the rooms with his pistol, looking for robbers. At length he satisfied himself and returned to his chamber.

I now desired to escape from the house. The hall door was entirely beyond my reach; but again I could have resort to the transom. If I could only reach the railings outside I might work my way along them until I met some one. I felt an inextinguishable longing to be with you, the only man to whom I could explain my strange case, and of whose sympathy I could be certain.

With much effort I forced the transom, and creeping through, I hung for a moment by my hands. I dared not look down into the fathomless abyss. A single glance would have destroyed me. Wisely I forbore, and commenced to climb up in the direction of the street railing. The inequalities in the woodwork and my light weight favored me. The next instant my hand grasped the iron. I drew myself up until my head touched the stone coping, and planting my feet upon the ornamented finish of the fence, I worked my way along the street.

It was now nearly two in the morning, and I am satisfied that I should have reached your door in safety if I had not, in turning the corner, had the misfortune to be espied by a policeman. This man, as you know, seeing me standing on my head, thought me a maniac. He called up another policeman, and despite my entreaties I was carried off to the station. Being turned around what they thought was the right way, despite my attempts at explanation, in the hands of these ignoramuses, I narrowly escaped suffocation. Conducted

to the police station, they threw me into a cell, where I fell with such force against the ceiling that I lost my senses. When restored to consciousness two hours later I found myself sitting up on the floor. The influence of Perigo had passed. I was again subordinate to the law of terrestrial gravity.

This, my dear Monsieur Barbierre, is a brief outline of my adventures. To you, who know my family history and the vindictiveness of my wife's relatives, I make this confession. As a man who reveres the truth and knows the incredulity of the public, you will see the futility of stating the exact facts in the case. I should never be believed. Worse, should I publish what I have here written, I should undoubtedly be adjudged insane.

I beg of you to exert, therefore, your inexhaustible ingenuity in rescuing your brother scientist from his present predicament without betraying his secret. Do this, and forever deserve the gratitude of your devoted friend, JULES BERTRAUD.

An interesting romance in the life of Michael Angelo, as told by M. A. in the Chicago *Globe*.

THE MISER'S HAND.

ONE evening in the year 1520, a woman, enveloped in a long black mantle, was walking toward the bridge of the Rialto in Venice. Her steps were weak and uneven, and at intervals she looked around with a hurried, frightened glance. She paused on the centre of the bridge and looked down with a shudder on the clear, blue waters of the Adriatic; then closing her eyes and murmuring faintly, "Antonio! my Antonio! Adieu!" she prepared to throw herself over the parapet.

Just as she was falling a man rushed forward, seized her with a powerful grasp, and, drawing her back, said: "Girl! destroy not thy life which Providence has given thee. If thou art unhappy enter thy church, kneel on its hallowed pavement, pour out thy sorrow, and thank thy Maker that thou hast been preserved from crime—from rushing uncalled into His presence!"

The girl impatiently tried to shake off the strong, kind hand that held her, and said: "Let me go! I must die!"

In another moment she tottered and fell to the ground, where she lay without sense or motion. Her preserver raised her head, and, in order to give her air, drew back the veil which concealed her features. They were very lovely, and the man gazed on her with wonder and admiration as she was gradually restored.

By degrees she told him who she was and where she lived. Her history might be summed up in a few words: An avaricious father, a poor lover, a mutual but unhappy love.

Vainly did Maria plead with her father, a rich innkeeper of Venice, the cause of her lover, Antonio Barbarigo, the handsome gondolier beneath the Bridge of Sighs. At length this evening her father, Gianettini, forgot himself so far as to strike his daughter with some

violence, and she, with far more culpable neglect of her duty, ran wildly from home, and, as we have seen, was arrested just on the verge of committing suicide.

The person who had saved her led her gently to her home, and, having given her up to her father, seated himself in an obscure corner of the hostelry. Gianettini received his child with rude reproaches, and, bidding her retire to her own apartment and betake herself to her spinning, he cast a suspicious glance at the person who brought her home, whose stout, manly figure and firm countenance, however, deterred the innkeeper from addressing him in a hostile manner.

As Maria turned to depart a young gondolier appeared at the door and furtively approaching her, said: "Dearest! dearest."

Gianettini rushed forward, shouting: "Out of this! Out of my house, fellow!"

The young man did not stir.

"Have you finished?" he said, in a good-humored tone. "Wherefore these hard words? Have you never loved, Signor Gianettini? Have you totally forgotten the feelings of your youth? Know you not that since I was ten years old and Maria five we have loved each other fondly? Will you not, then, allow us to hallow your old age with our tears?"

"I don't want to have a parcel of beggars for my children," said Gianettini roughly.

"Beggars!" replied the young man. "You surely forget yourself."

"Not I, indeed," returned the father. "I refuse my consent. Therefore get you gone."

"But hear me for one moment," pleaded the gondolier.

"'Tis useless. I again repeat that such as you shall never wed my daughter. Your position is too mean."

"Certainly, you are rich," replied the young man; "but what hinders that I should become so, too? A stout arm, a brave heart, an honest soul, will with the help of heaven do much."

"A fool's dream!"

"Nay," said Antonio, "it is sober sense. Prince Lorenzo de Medici was a merchant; Duke Giacomo Siorza a cowherd."

The man in the corner had hearkened attentively to this dialogue. He rose and, touching Barbarigo's shoulder, said: "Well spoken, gondolier. Courage brings success, and struggles bring conquests. Maria shall be thy wife."

"Never!" cried Gianettini.

"Master Jew," said the unknown, turning disdainfully toward him, "if this youth could lay down six hundred pistoles, would you object to the marriage?"

"Be that as it may, you must remember that he is now little better than a pauper."

"Pshaw!" said the unknown; "babblers are more tiresome than thieves. Before to-morrow you shall handle that sum."

So saying he drew from his pocket a piece of parchment and a crayon, and turning toward a table began rapidly to sketch a man's hand. It was represented open, impatient, with hollow palm, as if expecting a shower of gold-pieces. It had, so to speak, a sensuous, avaricious expression; and one of the fingers was encircled with a massive ring.

"'Tis my hand," cried Gianettini.

"And your history," said the artist.

Giving the sketch to Antonio, its author desired him to carry it to Pietro Benvois, librarian at the palace of St. Mark, and demand in exchange for it six hundred pistoles.

"Six hundred fools' heads!" cried the innkeeper. "I would not give a zecchin for it."

Without speaking the artist turned haughtily away.

The gondolier took the parchment and looked at it with astonishment. He then turned doubtfully toward Maria; but a glance from her soft dark eyes reassured him and he set out on his mission.

With folded arms and a moody brow the artist commenced pacing up and down the large room in the hostelry, casting at intervals a scrutinizing glance at the young girl, who, now penitent for her intended crime, was silently praying in a corner. As for Gianettini, he seemed unable to shake off the strange ascendancy gained over him by his unknown visitor; his habitual effrontery failed him, and for the first time in his life he dared not break silence.

An hour passed. Then hasty, joyous steps were heard, and Antonio appeared, bearing in his hand a bag and a letter. The bag contained six hundred pistoles, and the letter was addressed to the artist and prayed him to honor the senator with a visit.

"Take these coins and weigh them," said the unknown as he threw the bag toward Gianettini.

Antonio Barbarigo stood before his benefactor, pale and trembling with joy.

"One favor more," he said. "Who are you?"

"What does it matter?"

"What does it matter, say you?" cried the gondolier; "much—much to me! Tell me your name, that I may love and honor it to the last moment of my life."

"Men call me Michael Angelo. It is my turn now," he said, "to ask you a favor. It is to allow me to perpetuate on canvas the lovely features of Maria."

The girl approached; she could not speak; but she clasped the painter's hand and raised it to her lips. A tear fell on it, and Michael Angelo, as he drew her back, turned away to conceal his own emotions.

Twenty years passed on and found Antonio, the once humble gondolier, the happy husband of Maria and general of the Venetian republic. Yet his brilliant position never rendered him unmindful of his early life, and his heartfelt gratitude, as well as that of his wife, accompanied Michael Angelo Buonarrotti to the end of his days.

As to the crayon sketch of the miser's hand, it was taken from Italy by a soldier in Napoleon's army and placed in the Louvre. During the invasion of 1814 it was unfortunately lost, and, so far as can be ascertained, has never since been recovered. The story of its production, however, still lingers among the traditions of Venice.

"Was ever woman in this manner won?" Not often, perhaps, but this is a well-authenticated instance.

A NAPOLEON OF LOVE.

WELL, you know the rich Mrs. Hopkins, after she was widowed, became engaged to an army officer out in California. At any rate, he had announced the plighted troth in his mess, and it was accepted as a fact in society. At that time Searles was Mrs. Hopkins's architect, and was busying himself in furnishing and fitting up that big, airy house on Nob Hill. However, he had his eye on the widow, and she got to having a favorable eye for him. He was a very handy man to have about—made a good appearance, ran little errands well, and all that sort of thing.

Then she got the notion in her head of that big house at Great Barrington, and of course Searles was the architect selected to furnish the plans. They came East. This threw them more and more into each other's society, and Searles kept trying for the big matrimonial prize. But she remained true to her military hero.

They were at Great Barrington and he accompanied her to the train one day to see her off for New York. Half of Great Barrington's staid and prudish society was there, looking out for stray bits of gossip. Just as the train was pulling in, Searles put his arms around Mrs. Hopkins's waist and kissed her full upon the mouth.

There was a situation for you. Mrs. Hopkins kissed by a strange man, and half of Great Barrington looking on! It was either Searles or scandal. The widow was very quick to decide. With a wink of her eye she dropped the California officer. Turning to her nearest acquaintances, she said, loud enough for a large portion of Great Barrington to hear:

"Allow me to present my affianced husband, Mr. Searles."

She took the train, while he took himself by the hand with the thought, "Shake, Searlsey, old boy. You're the Napoleon of love."

The Detroit *Free Press* contributes this strong story.

WHAT KILLED HIM?

It is a sight never to be forgotten to see a man led out to execution by hanging, yet the picture is softened a great deal by the surroundings. But it is the sight of a man being led out to be shot to death which makes a picture to haunt you while you live. No man has ever seen it who does not shudder at the recollection.

Desertions from the Federal Army had become so frequent and had so demoralized certain regiments and brigades that it was determined, in the winter of 1864, to put a stop to them by inflicting the penalty prescribed in army regulations. A general order that this would be done was read in every camp, and it no doubt served as a warning to some. There were others, however, who were not to be intimidated, and on the night of the day the order was issued a man in my company coolly left us. He went out of camp in the wagon of a teamster, and before roll-call next morning was far away. His name was Hartness, and he could not even plead homesickness as an excuse. He had neither home nor near relatives, but was a tough young fellow of twenty-two. A week after his desertion he got into some trouble in Washington, the papers published his name, and in that way he was located and brought back. He returned in defiant mood, evidently having no fear that the sentence would be carried out.

A court-martial was called, a trial had, and Hartness was convicted and sentenced to be shot. The finding had to go to the President for his approval, and it was only when it had been sent away that the condemned would admit that he was worried. I was one drawn to act as a guard over him, and saw him at least every other day. About the time the verdict of the court-martial was sent to Washington, the press was clamor-

ous for some remedy for desertion, and there was a public statement from the President that he would pardon no one duly convicted. This set Hartness to thinking, and he was not greatly surprised when the finding was returned approved. The day of execution was set for a week ahead. This was, I suppose, that the matter might be generally talked about in the whole army corps, and so it was. At noon, when Hartness was informed of his fate, he was red-faced and showed no trace of anxiety. Four hours later, when I came on guard, I had to look twice to be sure that it was he. His face was very pale, care-lines appeared here and there, and his eyes were sunken. Had he been ill for a month, the change could have been no greater. It was the shadow of death.

I watched him from day to day, and every day there was a change. For the first four days he was in a state of dumb despair. Then I saw a strange light in his eyes, and we searched him to discover that he had secreted a knife and contemplated suicide. On the morning of the day he was led out to die, Hartness was as weak as a child. I believe he lost at least twenty-five pounds of flesh within the week. For an hour or two he wept and prayed by turns. Then he got his nerve and braced up for the inevitable. Not one word did he say as he marched to the place of execution. He looked around at the soldiers gathered there, but I don't think he saw a single face. I think he was stone-blind from fear. When blindfolded he moaned out in his agony of spirit, but sat bolt upright. At the first low word spoken by the officer in command of the firing party, Hartness fell over backward, and when he was lifted up it was found that he was dead—dead of sheer fright.

A noble act—one worthy of a princess—fittingly described by Mary Hartwell Catherwood in the Chicago *Tribune*.

A KENTUCKY PRINCESS.

[Time, 1857.]

THE perfection of summer noon, when acres of corn tasse's seemed in a trance and the blueness of far-off hills suggested incense rising, was not without its effect on Miss Sally Vandewater as she rode toward General Peyton's plantation. The turnpike, stretching its ash-colored ribbon across the greenness of the country, rang like a causeway of rock to the beat of horse-shoes.

From this plantation or from that, as hill or sweep of woodland revealed them, shone marble stones in family burial lots.

Occasionally Miss Sally met girls or young men on dashing horses, who called out gayly and cordially to her in passing. But in all that blue-grass region — where each member of every comfortable family has his own saddle-horse—there was not a finer animal than Miss Sally's Pacer. Cæsar and his fortunes were abroad when she mounted. Pacer was her entire capital in life, carrying her on visits among good families whereby she subsisted, and furnishing colts for her pin-money. The camel is not as much to the Bedouin. Had Pacer failed Miss Sally in any point, she must have fallen into those straits known only to reduced gentlewomen instead of carrying a high head through all the best houses of the county.

Yet Miss Sally showed no extravagant gratitude for benefits received. She rode Pacer at a steady hand gallop through the sultry day, disregarding the whinnying cry of a young colt behind and a gentle mother's distress, increasing her speed past one pillared brick house set far up an avenue. The woods about it were close-trimmed and free from underbrush like all stretches of Kentucky woodland. Some evergreens made gloom close about its eaves, but not such gloom

as the reputation of the house itself. There lived a man who was said to have a chain stretched across his cellar. He bought up slaves and handcuffed them in pairs on each side of this chain until he was ready to ship them to the market, when a band of musicians was employed to lead their march, cheerfully playing "Yankee Doodle." The house was worse than haunted. Both whites and blacks hurried past its handsome rustic gate with abhorrence—spot of mystery and abomination on those pleasant corn lands.

Miss Sally was anxious to get out of her riding-skirt at Peyton's and bully the black boy who would come to take her bridle. The wealthiest slave-owner in Kentucky hardly exacted as much deference. Everybody humored her, and, in a country where hospitality was sacred as religion, her little visits of a month or two were cheerfully received even when they crowded dearer guests. And though she had good traits concealed under the haughty airs of a nomad, well did she know how to crowd people distasteful to her.

When she turned in at Peyton's avenue the white-pillared house of her destination seemed to doze. Miss Sally was skipping one place in her rounds and shortening her visit by a week at another that she might be at Peyton's in time to witness everything which preceded the wedding.

The quarters in a long whitewashed row stretched fieldward. Miss Sally could not see the kitchen standing by itself behind the great house. No drowsiness had settled there. Stir and great preparation were going on, not only for the two-o'clock dinner, but for the wedding, which was only a week distant.

A yellow boy skipped out to help Miss Sally at the mounting-block; he would have lounged to his master. With approval she saw him pull his hat to her.

"Miss Sally, you sho'ly bake you'self."

"Yes, it's a hot day, Peachy. And if you're concerned about me I hope you'll feel more concerned about Pacer, for she's had the worst of it." Miss Vandewater's anxiety about the welfare of her property grew in the ratio of its approach to a crib.

"Sam'll rub her down," promised Peachy. "I'll tell Sam to give her a good feed."

"You attend to it yourself," commanded Miss Sally.

"But I ain't a stable boy," remonstrated Peachy. "I's a house boy."

"House boy or stable boy, you mind what I tell you. In my father's time—and he owned fifty— our boys did whatever they were told to do."

"Ya-as, m'm," conciliated Peachy.

"And the poor little colt," said Miss Sally, making that infant's discomfort her own; "I don't want my colt kicked to death among a lot of wild, shod heels."

"He go with his mammy. No ha'um nevah happen to yo' colts on this place, Miss Sally."

"You see to it that none happens this time. All the family at home?" she stopped to inquire, with her riding-skirt gathered in her hand.

"Ya-as, m'm."

"Has my trunk been carried up? I sent it up by one of Jameson's boys this morning."

"Ya-as, m'm."

"Who's here?" demanded Miss Vandewater, stiffening her figure.

Peachy followed her eye to the stable yard, where stood a vehicle she never beheld with calmness. It was the handsome and shining carriage of Judge Peyton, from the county seat of Paris.

Peachy grinned.

"Miss Judge come out this mawnin' fo' to spend the day."

The wandering spinster had always—on approaching Mrs. Peyton, of Paris—a desire to clothe herself in complete panoply of war for the encounter. So sore does one's pride become when chafed by poverty that she hated that plump and opulent woman for naught but being plump and opulent; though Miss Sally would have told you it was for putting on the aggressive airs of a woman married above her wildest expectations.

Even Kentucky hospitality had yielded to the languor of summer mid-day. Miss Vandewater followed the colored girl who admitted her up-stairs before the drowsy mistress of the house trailed in muslin wrapper to meet her.

"You can fetch my riding-skirt up to my room, Nancy," said the guest, dropping it across the stair

rail as she ascended. "I reckon I go to the same room I always have."

"Miss Ma'ky's things is all spread out in that bedroom," apologized Nancy.

"You can soon move them out of the way."

"But Miss Maria 'bleeged to have yo' trunk set in the back bedroom fo' this week, Miss Sally."

Riding a blooded mare the rounds of best Kentucky families entitled one to more respect than any back bedroom implied. Miss Sally suffered her hostess to come near and shake her hand and touch her cheek, and then she put the lady into the apologetic attitude of an overcrowded landlord.

"You ought to have sent me word if it was inconvenient to have me now, Mrs. Peyton, and I wouldn't have skipped Moore's as I did."

"Miss Sally, it is not inconvenient to have you now!" With outstretched palms, and nods, and anxious distention of eyelids the lady pleaded her cause. "It is never inconvenient. Only America's things are so spread out. I am so glad you have come. We expected you at least this long before the wedding."

"The judge's wife is here."

"But she is not staying," unconsciously apologized the hostess. "It is only for the day. And Sue Bet Moore has been here helping America to try on. Her dresses are all done now. But Sue Bet has gone."

"Yes, I heard Sue Bet was to be America's bridesmaid," said Miss Sally. It was not necessary to begin about bridemaids to a woman of Miss Sally's thorough information.

"We have all been lying down; the day is so sultry. We shall not have America's things filling up the bedrooms much longer. I feel as if I could give her all the rooms in the house; yes, the plantation itself. If you will only make yourself comfortable a few days we can change it."

"The back bedroom makes not the slightest difference in the world to me, Mrs. Peyton——"

"O Miss Sally, I am so glad if it makes no difference!"

"But I am sorry I came at such an inconvenient time."

Thus the duet went on in struggle to appease and repetition of regrets. Yet a most gracious figure was Miss Sally Vandewater when she descended from the back bedroom to dine with the family and sit in the parlor through a long afternoon. She was quite fifty years old, but sprightly and still youthful in shape. Her muslin dress was cut low and her shoulders were concealed by the bertha of lace. Fine embroidered undersleeves made delicate frills around her folded hands. The curling-iron had created two large spirals at each temple, but the rest of her hair was pinned in a knot at the back of her head. She was always an amusing study to the judge's wife, who watched her with the furtive smiles which enraged Miss Sally, Mrs. Peyton meanwhile talking to them of America, and nothing but America.

America came into the parlor in her tight-fitting habit of black velvet and sat down with the guests, holding her riding-whip, her gauntlets, and tall hat in her hands.

"You ain't going to ride?" demanded Miss Sally.

"We always ride Thursday afternoons after 4 o'clock, if the weather is fine," replied America.

"Then I reckon he'll be coming pretty soon," said Miss Sally, looking at her huge, open-face gold watch, which was guarded by a fanciful chain of human hair.

"Ross is prompt," said America.

She looked no less cool and white in the heavy fabric than in the gold-dotted vaporous tissue she had worn at dinner. Her black eyes moved with languid interest from speaker to speaker as the visiting chat ran on. America Peyton was called the proudest girl who rode into Paris from the surrounding plantations. The manners of this tall beauty were considered too quiet by romping young people who danced, drove, and flirted to the limit of their privileges, yet she was sovereign among them and ruled more completely by a look than others by much noisy effort. It was told of her that she often sat veiled in the parlor to save her complexion from sun-glare and wind. She had a robe of black curls in which she could wrap herself when her maid let it down to be brushed. America was General Peyton's only child. She owned a plantation adjoining

her father's with more than a hundred slaves, which she had inherited from her grandmother. When she went to boarding-school in the county town one of her servants led to her every pleasant Friday evening a milk-white mule, saddled and bridled in silk, fine leather, and silver.

Though above such pastime as flirtation, America had had more offers than any other girl in her set. Her low, slow voice never recounted these conquests, but the victims published themselves, wondering whom America Peyton would marry, since she was so hard to suit. When she accepted Ross Carr, therefore, the astonishment was general. He was good enough for some girls, but nobody expected America Peyton to take an ordinary man. He had also been a wild youth, but people said he was settling down to worthy manhood. The Carrs were not as good a family as the Peytons, and Ross had no plantation of his own. Yet when the community thought it over they were willing to accept him as America's husband if he proved a credit to her.

"Miss Maria," said Nancy, coming to the door with a face full of meaning, "Miss Becky Inchbald's done lighted down by the quarters and tied her horse."

"What does she want?" inquired Mrs. Peyton, disturbed.

"Dunno, Miss Maria."

"Why doesn't she come to the house?"

"She hardly ever came here in her best days," murmured the judge's wife.

"Perhaps she's sick," continued Mrs. Peyton. "Some of you run and see."

"Peachy been down to her and she say she just waitin' there in the shade. Miss Becky got her baby 'long with her."

The general's wife heard this with rising dignity.

"Don't annoy her," she commanded. "Let the poor girl alone."

"Laws, Miss Maria, nobody won't say nothin' to Miss Becky. But all the little niggers has come out to look at her."

"Go out yourself and see if she needs anything."

"I have heard," remarked Miss Vandewater through

the silence which followed, "that Becky Inchbald, for all she was so close-mouthed at first, threatens to carry her child to its father now."

Mrs. Peyton, with an instant's pause on the subject, hoped he could be found and made to do his duty. The judge's wife heard with a mere lifting of the eyebrows. She thought it scarcely a fit thing to mention before America. But America's plane of thought was so much above Becky Inchbald that she had never even disapproved of the girl.

Becky Inchbald's people were not poor whites, for they owned land and slaves, but their raw unfitness for encountering the old stock held them on the verge of society. That Becky was uneducated was her own fault; such women scarcely learn even from experience. She had been the mother of a hapless baby and the scandal of the neighborhood for more than two months.

"She's spiteful about that baby," pursued Miss Sally. "There'll be trouble somewhere before sundown if she's started out with it."

"I do not see that Inchbald's affairs need disturb us," suggested the judge's wife, making dimples at the finger roots of one hand as she smoothed her polished hair.

"Some women are never disturbed about any of the sin in the world," said Miss Vandewater incisively, "until it comes into their houses and takes their children by the throats."

"That can never be said of you, Miss Sally," the judge's indolent wife responded, smiling. Though she generally bore Miss Sally's attacks as a lady should, and felt indulgent sympathy for the migrating spinster, she sometimes allowed herself to retort.

"Aunt and Miss Sally, kiss and make up," said America with the deliberate accent which gave weight to all her words. But without response one of the combatants sat glowering, and the other, waving a lazy fan, indicated Ross Carr cantering to his appointment, man and animal moving like one, so perfect was his horsemanship. America's mother was impatiently anxious to go on recounting to Miss Sally the silver and linen bought for America's new home

Ross Carr threw his bridle to a groom, who was walking America's restless thoroughbred, saddled and ready for her use.

He entered the room and she gave him her hand with a light word, and he stood, hat in hand, talking to her elders.

It was the culminating moment of her engagement; a dot of time stamping its languid ease and freedom from care upon her mind, by contrast with what followed.

The young man chatted idly with the three women, when another screamed out behind him:

"Here it is, Ross Carr, so you've got to take it and no words betwixt us, for I won't take care of it no longer!"

"Why, Miss Becky—why, Miss Becky!" Mrs. Peyton herself ran gasping forward to interpose between such scandalous outcry and America's lover. "Come away with me, Miss Becky, and let me help you with your baby, and don't speak that way before the gentleman!"

A shaker bonnet fell back from the girl's hot and furious face. She had narrow, sunken temples like a hen's; her whole profile was chicken-beaked, yet a fluff of golden down made her comely. The wrathful rings in her eyes sent out their fires toward Ross Carr.

"He thinks he's a gentleman, and he thinks he's going to get a great lady——"

"Becky Inchbald, sit down in that chair," commanded America, standing at the other side of the room. Her hat and gloves and whip lay on the floor. The other women, even her mother, sat blanched and waited.

Carr remained with his hand on the back of the chair, like a frozen figure, while Becky, frightened, placed herself in it and stretched the baby across her lap. Her first courage leaving her, she began to cry.

The men of the West do not cower when found out in their sins. Ross Carr stood six feet and one inch high; a handsome, light-haired Kentuckian, the man most abundant in vitality and the best horseman in Bourbon County. A culprit waiting to be shot, he looked his death in the face, erect, but blighted through

every outline. He had carried this guilt a long time, trying to shape it into some disclosure, while day after day further separated him from the past Ross Carr and made harder his inheritance from that wretch.

When you or I stand on our day of judgment to be looked at through the dark medium of our basest moments, may some eye among our contemners see the angel shape trembling in anguish behind the bar.

"Is this child yours?" America demanded of him, pointing it out for his identification.

The baby, oppressed by the jaunt, under arm or on lap according to its mother's convenience in riding, was covered over all its visible surface by that prickly rash which nurses call "heat." It was gowned in pink calico and diffused a sour odor.

Ross Carr looked at it with the slighting masculine eye which, since the time of Saturn, has seen little to admire in extremely young offspring, and he controlled the muscles of his lips to reply:

"I reckon it is."

"Answer me on your word as a man. Is this your child?"

"Yes; it is."

"He knows it's his, and he's got to take care of it and support it—it's his place to take care of it, not mine," sobbed Becky, her head waving with her grievance.

America directed her face to Becky. "Do you intend to turn it off your hands entirely?"

"Yes, I do. It's his and he ought to keep it."

"But you are its mother."

"I won't be its mother," exploded Becky, flinging the ill-kept and wretched baby about on her knees with a vicious grip. "I'll give it away or leave it on some doorstep if he don't keep it."

The child put up a piteous lip and uttered those cries by which bruised infancy protests against bruisers whom it feels but does not know.

America stared at the girl; her alabaster face was suddenly drained of horror at the wrong which had been done to a woman, and filled with passionate contempt.

"Then I'll be its mother. Give it to me."

She gathered it off Becky's lap and laid its heat-blotched face against her shoulder. The tiny creature discharged a mouthful of its wretchedness there, America stanching the spot and making a softer rest for its cheek with her rose-scented handkerchief.

Her unconscious sweep of figure in taking the child and standing up publicly with it, thrilled the beholders like piercing music or the sight of great works of art. The mother spirit which has brooded over this world for centuries—that passion for fostering, and training, and protecting—shone white and large in her face. She was that fair impersonation men call the Goddess of Liberty holding the outcast to her breast. She was Mother Mary with a reminder of the heavenly infant in her arms.

No one remonstrated or spoke a word to her as she moved from the room. Becky Inchbald, pulling her shaker over her face, went out and mounted her horse.

Ross Carr followed America as far as the foot of the stairs. She was already at the top, but when she heard him speak hoarsely, "One word, America," she turned and stood looking at him over the balustrade. The baby was quiet.

"America, is all over—between us?" He could hear his watch ticking and out-door sounds buzzing in his ears.

"No," said America. "It is not all over between us."

Ross Carr dropped his groping hand on the stair newel, his next sentence coming also in fragments.

"There won't be any use— Shall I come here—for the ceremony—next Thursday?"

"Thursday," spoke the low, slow voice above him, "at two o'clock was the time we set."

The culprit lifted his eyes to her and exclaimed:

"America, tell me what you want me to do!"

"I want you," she said, "to be a father to your child!" Her mouth struggled. She flung out the rest in a wail —"and never speak to me of this again!"

Not fit to prostrate himself before her virgin motherhood, the tarnished man hid his face on his arm against the stair rail. She carried the child out of sight.

There was scarcely a negro on the plantation who did not know what had happened when Ross Carr swung

out of the house and passed his chafing horse and the groom as if he had forgotten his own property.

Baseless mountains overhead which had been floating and piling lucent peak over peak now seemed to sink in smoke to the effacement of the sun. The stretches of forest and road, plantations and dimpled hills, from horizon to horizon, ceased smiling and looked grave, for the day's heat was about to pass off in drenching rain.

This cloudy interval before the thunder burst was just the time for stealing corn to roast at the quarters in the evening. So Peachy crept on all fours down narrow avenues to avoid agitating the corn-tops, such tell-tales are the tassel fingers. His sack already bulged behind one elbow, but unexpectedly he came against a man stretched out in the dirt, face downward—Miss Ma'ky's Mist' Ross Carr.

Peachy backed away from the spectacle. He could hear grinding of teeth and see the veins on the man's neck swell.

Not until many cornstalks screened him had Peachy the courage to burst recklessly down a slim alley, spilling his stolen ears, while the corn leaves slashed his face with their edged sabres. The childish African mind, without pausing to sort out causes, instinctively fled from the sight of anguish so dumb and dreadful.

While the county was shocked by America Peyton's adoption of Ross Carr's child, her beauty as a bride softened all critics. She went to live with her husband on her plantation, and there the baby grew into robust and happy boyhood. Reticence on the subject of Becky Inchbald was diffused through her small world. At that date a small world held all the acts of many lives. Even Miss Sally Vandewater, swelling her visiting list with another house, grew into complete harmony with the judge's wife on the subject of Becky Inchbald.

Becky Inchbald went on a long visit to Tennessee. News came that she had married there, and in the course of years that she had died.

So far as human knowledge goes, Ross Carr's wife took no shrewish revenge, though a woman of her nature must have suffered from the blot. She always

spoke of his son as "our eldest boy," and he grew up among brothers and sisters without knowing that he was part alien until neighbors dropped the fact in his ear. Personally he was much like his father, whose wrong matured its bitterest fruit when that child threw himself on the ground to sob in secret agony because the beautiful and tender woman he loved with such devotion was really not his mother.

A domestic revolution, and what caused it.
The story is from the New York *Tribune.*

TOM RYDER'S CHILD.

Mr. Marsh, when he was sitting in the village store with the heels of his well-tallowed boots carefully poised on the edge of the corrugated cylinder stove, was a far larger man than when he was at home. Perhaps it was for that reason that he spent so much time in the store. A man likes to feel large, and to hawk and expectorate in an independent manner.

When under the protection of his own roof this gentleman was very much in the shadow of his wife. He never hawked and he never expectorated there. He shrank up into the smallest possible compass and seemed to deprecate the fact that he was alive at all. If he could have come in and gone out at the key-hole he would have felt an unutterable relief. As it was, he was in constant fear lest he should forget to wipe his feet, or lest he should leave a door unlatched. He often told himself "he'd ruther be darned any day than to forgit to wipe his feet twice," first on the husk mat in the sink-room and next on the braided mat at the kitchen door. When Mr. Marsh said "he'd ruther be darned," he meant that he preferred being consigned to Hades. He often thought it would be a kind of relief to be in that place "and done with it." But he always was very meek indeed when he had indulged in such thoughts.

Mrs. Marsh was a large, dark, mustached woman, who was believed by some to be a good nurse. She certainly had the merit of subduing her charges into absolute quiescence. She boasted that folks that "she took care on knew their places mighty quick; 'n' their places was to jest lay still 'n' let the Lord do as he pleased."

She was fond of mentioning the Lord at the most unexpected and irritating times. She had referred to

him on so many occasions in regard to her husband's bringing in "medder mud" and other kinds of soil on the soles of his boots that Mr. Marsh was continually harassed by a fear lest he might become prejudiced, and acquire a habit of thinking disrespectfully of the Lord. If he did acquire such a habit, he hoped fervently and in plain terms that it might be laid to D'rindy's charge rather than to his. Dorinda was his wife's name; and it was the name given to each of five consecutive daughters who had been born to Mr. and Mrs. Marsh and who had all died when children.

There were residents in the village who always took friends who came from a distance to the graveyard to see the "row of D'rindies," as this series of mounds was usually termed.

These continual bereavements were very hard to bear during their occurrence, but after some years had passed and the wounds were scarred, Mrs. Marsh was conscious of a certain distinction coming from the fact that she was, in a certain sense, owner of that row in the cemetery. She had a pride in keeping the small graves and their headstones in the very best condition; or rather she made Mr. Marsh keep them so.

When I have seen that woman striding toward the hill slope where the graveyard was, I have wondered if she did not feel a satisfaction that there were five mounds instead of four; five made a much more impressive row. If one of those babies had grown it would doubtless have brought in a great deal of mud in the spring, snow in the winter, and road dust in the summer. It would have "littered things up jest awful," to use a favorite expression of Mrs. Marsh's. Was it possible that there were compensations? It is a distinction, too, to have had a "dretful sight of sickness in your family;" to have "notes put up" for the sufferer and the sufferer's friends. Do you know what it means to have a note put up? It is to arrange that the minister shall find, apparently in the hymn-book, a scrap of paper asking the prayers of the congregation for a family in affliction. The name of the person is often given, and then there is a rustling, and a turning, and a looking at the nearest relative who happens to be present. When things by land and by sea have been

prayed for, when people "scattered up and down this sinful earth" have been mentioned, then the minister changes his tone to one of more feeling, and petitions that this dear sister whose child is on a bed of sickness may be strengthened to endure, and that, if it be so decided that she be called upon to give up that beloved one, she may be enabled to bow her head to His great and glorious will, and to bless him, even though he slay.

There is a great sameness about the words used in response to this asking for prayers, but who shall say that those phrases do not sometimes touch healingly a sore heart?

Reuben Marsh never missed going to meeting a single Sunday during all the times when his children were pining and dying.

Sometimes he would far rather have stopped at home, being possessed by that piteous and natural feeling that he, with all his strength and vigor, might in some way give of that strength to the poor little thing moaning on the bed. But his wife had made him go. She had even found time as usual to fasten his collar and button on the rusty black necktie.

And he had always heard those prayers in answer to the note he had put up. He held himself rigidly upright. His heavy, bearded face was impassive to look upon. People who looked at him curiously saw nothing but the calm, rough face. His hands were thrust into the big pockets of his loose sack-coat; the great, knuckly fingers writhed and twisted as the prayer proceeded.

Mr. Marsh heard the words going on and on over his head. He felt as if he were groping in horrible darkness. All the time he was saying to himself: "O God, let her live! O God, let her live! I can't live if you take this one, too!"

He thought he could not live. But that one, too, was taken, and still the sun continued to rise and set on Reuben Marsh. And still Mrs. Marsh hectored him from morning to night, and occasionally reminded him of what a mother suffered in the loss of a child. She said she s'posed a father had some feelings, but how could a father know a mother's heart?

Evidently there was no answer to this question. Certainly Mr. Marsh attempted to give none.

Mrs. Marsh talked a great deal to her husband and to the neighbors generally about the fact that all her children had been born without any constitutions. She didn't know why it was, for all her folks were made of iron. She often inquired how a child with no constitution at all could be expected to live. She told Reuben it was too much to ask. She gave every one to understand that Reuben seemed to believe their children ought to live, but she knew they couldn't.

As the years went by she made Mr. Marsh keep those little graves, and their headstones, and their lettering of "Dorinda, daughter of Reuben and Dorinda Marsh," more and more "trigged up." When Mr. Marsh was not at home nor at the store, it was well known that he must be "to the cemetr'y triggin' up them graves."

It was one mild day in winter that Mr. Marsh put on his overcoat and his rubber boots. He said he was going down to the store and guessed he should just stop in at the graveyard before he came home. The hill sloped to the south there, and it was warm and sunny, almost like a spring day.

The man had it in his mind that there was just a chance that some snowdrops might be blossomed, or at least budded. But if he should find a bloom he was not so crazy, he told himself, as to take it to his wife, who would only consider it as some kind of "litter." He should stop at the store, as he said, and he should probably see Tom Ryder's forlorn little girl shivering about, and he should give the flower to her. Then her small, pinched face would suddenly lighten, and she would smile in that radiant way that always went like a knife to Reuben Marsh's heart. He wondered if any of those Dorindies, if any had lived, would have had such a face and such a smile as that. If they "took after" their mother they surely would not.

Once after Mr. Marsh had seen this transformation take place in the face of Tom Ryder's daughter when she had received a kindness, he had ventured to speak about her to his wife, with a wild hope in the bottom of his heart that they might adopt Ryder's child, for Ryder was only a drunken wretch whose wife had long since died of a broken heart and too much work.

Mrs. Marsh made it very plain indeed to her husband that she had no opinion whatever of that nasty Belle Ryder.

Mr. Marsh had fallen into his ordinary home mood of dull, cowed silence. He sat with his slippered feet on their wooden cricket, and hung his head, pulling his beard slowly and wondering what he was living for.

He supposed men never hated their wives. He supposed there was no man in the world whose wife was such a good cook, who kept her husband's clothes so well mended and so clean as D'rindy did, but he said plainly to himself that "he'd ruther be flogged than to be where she was."

Often, as he sat there, pulling his beard and watching D'rindy as she made everything painfully clean, he told himself that he must have been even more of a fool than most young men to have fallen in love with a girl who could turn out to be such a woman as that. He also asked of his own soul how it would be with him if it were possible for a man to hate his wife.

When he walked slowly through the mud of the main street he was conscious that there was more than the ordinary bitterness in his heart. He stamped down his heavy feet with an air of bravado when he reached the store. He took in a large quantity of mud, and he talked so loudly and spat so emphatically that the storekeeper winked at the man next to him and said in a whisper that D'rindy must have been carryin' an uncommon high hand with Reuben that day.

But for all this extra swagger Mr. Marsh was aware that he was greatly depressed. It did not seem to exhilarate him to have his heels on the stove. He did not understand himself to-day, and he left the store much earlier than was his custom. One of the men actually got up from his broken-backed chair and went to the window to watch the retreating figure.

"Something or other's the matter of Reub Marsh," he said pityingly. "I never seen him miss his aim a-spittin' before, 'n' he missed it every time to-day."

The storekeeper was chopping off a piece of tobacco. He nodded his head. He said he was sorry for Reub. He s'posed he was goin' up to them graves now. He hoped it wa'n't wicked, but he did think 'twould be jest

as well if there was a sixth grave in that row and D'rindy was laying in it. For his part he'd like to help trig up D'rindy Marsh's grave, whether 'twas wicked or not.

Then they fell to talking about Tom Ryder, and of the fact that he had been gone a week, nobody knew where, on a worse spree than ever.

"I guess they'll have to take the little one to the poorhouse this time, and no mistake. Somebody ought to speak to the selectmen, 'n' have her seen to."

Mr. Marsh walked on mechanically up the road. He did not know why it was that he could not throw off his wife's influence when he had left her, as he was usually able to do.

Some strangely desperate mood was upon him. He put his hand to his head, and said if he didn't know better he should almost think he had been drinking.

Just before he reached the cemetery he passed by the house where the Ryders lived, an old place with low eaves that looked as if they would always drip with unhealthy moisture. Some of the window-panes were stuffed with rags, a cat walked with ostentatious misery among the puddles near the front door.

Mr. Marsh wished he had brought some baker's cookies from the store, but as he had nothing he went on staring vainly about in the hope of seeing Belle.

In a few minutes more he was standing by the row of graves and looking sharply down at the sodden turf for the snowdrops. There were the green leaves. He knelt and pushed aside the brown, wet grass. His heavy face took on a pathetic look of eagerness. No, it was too early; the sun had not been warm enough. There were no blossoms—not even buds.

"It's too bad—too bad!" he muttered. "How she would er liked 'em!"

He stood up. He brushed a mist from his eyes that made the headstones look as if they were not straight.

Something that felt cold and wet, like ice, touched the hand that hung down by his side. But he did not notice the touch until it was repeated, this time accompanied by a whine. Mr. Marsh roused himself and patted the lean, unhappy-looking cur that stood beside him.

"Hullo, Jack," he said, "where's your little mistress?"

Jack wagged his tail and made as if he would trot back home, but as Mr. Marsh did not follow him he returned and licked his hand again. He went through all these movements so many times that the man at last walked after him, the dog continually looking behind, until he had led his friend to the back door of the Ryder house. This door stood open.

Mr. Marsh had not heard that Tom Ryder was "on a spree," and he expected every moment to be greeted by the owner of this place, whom he despised and whom he always wanted to kick every time he saw him.

Instead of a masculine voice, however, a piping, feeble treble sounded from one of the front rooms.

"O Jack, don't you leave me too! Don't you go 'n' leave me too!"

Reuben Marsh stood suddenly still from sheer weakness. His great, tender heart seemed to choke him. He heard the dog whining joyfully and scuttling about the room he had entered. He breathed a long breath and pushed the door further open, apparently taking but one stride from the door to a "trundle bed" which was in a corner. On the bed was a child who stared wildly for an instant at this intruder, then a flush of joy overspread her face. She put out two bony arms to the man bending over her. She laughed.

"I've jest be'n prayin' for a friend," she cried feebly. "I kep' a-prayin' so hard that God had to hear, finally."

Mr. Marsh gathered the child to his breast. His heart glowed. His eyes sparkled as he felt the frail form leaning confidingly against him.

He took a frayed blanket from the bed and wrapped her up until she was like a mummy. He was smiling all the while he was doing this.

"Where's your father?"

"I d' know. He's been gone ever so many days, I guess."

"Ain't you hungry?"

"I was hungry after I et up all there was, some bread 'n' sausage. Then I got faint; then I was so awful kind of sick."

The child leaned her head on the man's shoulder and shut her eyes. He held her yet closer.

"I'll take ye right home," he said.

He stepped out into the mild, damp air. He held his head very high, and his eyes sparkled more than ever. He walked down and into the village street as if he had been a soldier coming from a victory. He nodded at the few acquaintances he saw, and who looked at him wonderingly, but he would not stop to speak to any one.

The storekeeper saw him and said to a customer that there was Reub Marsh with Ryder's little girl, 'n' he guessed Reub 'd ketch it when he got home.

Mr. Marsh still held his head up when he entered his own kitchen, tracking in a good deal of mud as he did so, for he did not pause at the husk mat, nor yet at the rug by the kitchen door.

"Bring me a cup of milk with a drop of hot water in it," he said, sitting down in the large rocker by the stove.

Jack had entered also, and he also had brought in mud. He sat calmly on his dirty haunches on the shiny oilcloth by the chair which held Mr. Marsh and his mistress.

Mrs. Marsh stood a moment in bewilderment; then she brought the milk.

Her face softened somewhat as she looked at the pinched features on her husband's shoulder.

"She is starving," said Mr. Marsh, shortly.

"We'll give her a good meal, 'n' then you c'n take her right back," remarked Mrs. Marsh, with her usual decision. She added that Reuben could go right over to Mr. Wallis, who was one of the selectmen, and have the child taken to the poorhouse that very night.

In ten minutes the girl was sound asleep. Mr. Marsh laid her on the lounge and covered her with a shawl. He fed Jack, who ate very hastily and with the utmost greediness and then curled up on the floor by the couch.

Reuben Marsh rose from his bending position over the lounge. He looked his wife squarely in the face, a thing he had not done for years.

She gazed back at him with something like consternation slowly growing in her mind.

"I'm goin' to do one of two things, D'rindy," he said, very slowly, "and it's for you to say which it'll be. I'm goin' to keep Tom Ryder's child, if he don't take her away from me, 'n' I guess he won't. I'm goin' to keep her here if you're willin'; if you ain't willin' I sh'll go where I can keep her. 'N' she's goin' to be treated well, too. Now, which shall it be, D'rindy?"

Mr. Marsh, with that delicious love for the child in his heart, looked very big and manly.

Mrs. Marsh mechanically brushed the stove hearth with a turkey wing before she replied.

"I ruther think, Reuben," she said, "you might's well keep her here."

A crime and the strange way in which it was detected. The story-teller is M. Betham Edwards, and the story was first told in *Once a Week*.

THE MAN WITH THE WAXEN FINGER.

I.

It happened one mid-winter, many years ago, that, in company with other travellers, I was snowed up at Marseilles. I had embarked from Algiers, leaving tropical weather behind, but a sudden storm came up in the Gulf of Lyons. After tossing about uncomfortably for many hours in sight of port, we were obliged to put back to sea, our passage lasting double the usual time. Instead of clouds of dust, a hot wind, and blinding sunshine—the tourist's usual portion at Marseilles—the aspect of the city was wholly Siberian. A snow-storm of almost unheard-of severity had swept over central and southern France, blocking roads and railways, and, for the time, completely cutting off communication with Paris. We were only a day's journey from the capital, but no one could give us any idea as to the time of getting there.

The hotel at which I had put up was comfort itself. Cheerful wood-fires blazed all over the house. Corridors, staircases, and salons were brilliantly illuminated at dusk. The mid-day and six-o'clock *table d'hôte* offered a variety of dishes, cooked in the best French manner. After dinner, music, conversation, and cards made up for the want of letters and newspapers.

The company was a varied and sociable one; fortunately, also, not without accomplishments. One traveller could set our hair on end with ghost stories; another could melt us to tears with pathetic verse; a third send us into paroxysms of laughter with mimicry and caricature; a fourth puzzle every one out of his wits with sleight-of-hand. Some were equally well pleased to look on and applaud. Let me now particularize a little, for the strange circumstances which I am

going to narrate have imprinted every detail on my memory.

I see before me, as if they were acquaintances of yesterday, the two middle-aged Englishmen—what hotel ordinary is without their counterparts?—who had seen everything in Europe from Spitzbergen to the Golden Horn, and who made themselves unobtrusively agreeable to everybody; the cheery old priest, just arrived after twenty years' missionary work in Cochin-China; the young French naval officer, about to join his squadron at Toulon; the clever actress, "starring" as a dramatic reader; the good-natured, rotund little pianist, her husband; the pretty and pert American sisters, with their unsophisticated parents, from Chicago; lastly, the pair of West Indians, the two Basilios. These young men, so singularly alike as to suggest the notion of twins, arrived only two or three days before the breaking up of our little party. They had disembarked at Bordeaux from the Manillas, and were bound to Algiers, one of them having just inherited a large property in the French colony. So he carelessly told me as we chatted at dinner, and I dare say I should have thought no more of the communication but for an incident that happened a few hours later.

The new-comers did not join us in the parlor. My dinner-table companion lingered on the threshold, as if intending to do so; he even entered into a lively conversation with the vivacious Americans when the other called him away. I was thinking—must I confess the lazy wish?—what a pity we could not remain snow-bound a week or two longer, when two voices in the adjoining room attracted my attention.

I at once recognized the peculiar accent of the young West Indians. The first speaker, my dinner-table neighbor, seemed bent on expostulation.

"Why so suspicious, so ready to think ill of every one you meet, Raymond?" he was saying impatiently. "We are most likely not among sharpers or assassins. Moreover, I do not carry my newly-acquired fortune in my breast-pocket. What earthly harm can it do to tell an English tourist that I am going to take possession of a large estate in Algeria?"

"Prattling of private affairs to entire strangers can

never do good," retorted the other. "Do you wish before you have been under your own roof for four-and-twenty hours to be beset by speculators, money jobbers, and adventurers? And you are not able to say no. You would fall an easy prey to the designing."

"I must go my own way. Don't interfere with me, Raymond, there's a good fellow," was the reply, spoken not ungently, yet in a ruffled voice. "You know that I shall do all in my power to atone for your wrongs, and always treat you as a brother. But I cannot be lectured. I cannot be guided."

Here the conversation ended, so far as my ears were concerned. Softly opening the door, I hastened along the luxuriously-carpeted corridor and joined the company down-stairs. But the manner of the speakers and the purport of their words had aroused my curiosity. Next day, without appearing to do so, I watched the pair narrowly.

As I have already mentioned, they were extraordinarily alike: of the same age, stature, and build, and with features and complexion so nearly similar that it was difficult for strangers to tell them apart. They were, too, dressed after precisely the same fashion, down to the color of their neckties and the make of their enamelled sleeve-studs. Hair and beard were cropped to the same proportions. Each carried a watch chain of the same pattern, an eyeglass set in gold, and a diamond ring on the fourth finger of the left hand.

Those sparkling diamond rings led me to a strange discovery. The franker, more genial of the two, the newly-made millionaire, had by some freak of nature or accident in childhood been deprived of his left-hand little finger, the loss being most skilfully replaced by an artificial one in wax. No one, unless minutely watching his manipulations, would ever have found out the secret. The artificial limb precisely resembled a real one. It was jointed, and with a spring, moved by gentle friction, could be straightened, bent, and unbent again. In fact, to all intents and purposes its owner was as well off in the matter of fingers as his fellows, with one reservation: he could not play the piano.

"What a privation! Never to be able to learn music," he observed to me as if divining my thoughts.

"You were scrutinizing my waxen finger just now, sir. I would exchange its weight in gold for your own of flesh and blood, bone and muscle."

"I am half-inclined to wish that we could strike a bargain on the spot," I replied, laughingly. "Piano-playing is not much in my line; nor is money-making my strong point."

We happened to be alone in the smoking-room after breakfast, and he seemed disposed to talk.

"Well," he sighed good-humoredly, "I must be thankful to possess such a substitute," and he touched the spring, showing me the wondrously ingenious mechanism of his waxen finger. "Now, shall I tell you where to go for artificial limbs—noses, ears, legs, anything? I do believe there is only one place in the world where they can be had to perfection."

I acquiesced readily. We can never possess too much miscellaneous information, and I wanted to learn more of his history.

"I lost my finger by an accident five years ago, and my father sent me to Paris on purpose to have it replaced by the celebrated artist and mechanician—but here is his card. I carry the address of my benefactor about with me wherever I go, in the hope of rendering him service. Stay: I will write a word on the back, and if you have an hour to dispose of when next in Paris, do visit his atelier—museum, I should rather call it. You will be much amused."

He moved to the table, took up a pen, and wrote on the reverse side of the business card, "From your friend and well-wisher, Constant Adolf Basilio."

Having pocketed the card we chatted about other subjects. I found him a pleasant, fairly-educated, gentlemanly young fellow, not brilliant or superfluously endowed with worldly wisdom. I set him down as likely to be too easily led and guided—or misguided—however much he might resent anything that wore the look of interference. Truth to tell, I felt sorry for him, in spite of his good-fortune. I foresaw many a pitfall into which he would tumble headlong, many a snare that would be laid by the self-seeking and the unscrupulous.

And I mistrusted his companion, the half-brother of

the left hand—for such I took him to be—who kept such jealous watch over the young heir, already acting the part of a self-constituted guardian. On his side evidently lay all the masterfulness and determination.

Strive as he might, the newly-made millionaire must sooner or later become subordinate to the will of his worldly inferior; so at least it seemed to me. We became quite friendly after that little conversation, but in a day or two the blockade of snow was raised, and our group of ice-bound travellers broke up.

"Mind and pay me a visit if ever you cross over to Africa," said Constant to me at parting. His half-brother was absent. "I can offer you splendid sport—horses, dogs, Arab beaters: all most heartily at your service. And if you accidentally lose a finger you now know where to go for a substitute!"

II.

Ten years had passed away. That pleasant imprisonment at Marseilles, my flirtations with the pretty Americans, our charades, dances, and concerts, the two Basilios, the easy-going, affable heir and his reserved, suspicious double—all these had well-nigh faded from my memory, when quite unexpectedly I found myself on the way to Algiers. As I steamed from the grand French harbor and mused on my plans, I determined, should time and opportunity permit, to find the young men—middle-aged they would be by this time. The second visit to Marseilles had brought a vivid recollection of the first. I felt as much interested in the fate of my friend Constant of the waxen finger as if I had only parted from him the week before. Algiers, however, is one thing; Algeria another. When I referred to the address given me just ten years before, with the map of the French colony spread on the table, I was tempted to give up the projected visit.

I had pictured to myself a pleasant day's excursion in the immediate suburbs of the city. I now discovered that my undertaking was quite formidable. The railway helped me one-third of the way, about seventy miles in all; the diligence would take me about as far again; the remaining twenty and odd miles of wild

country I must get over as best I could. The whole thing savored of hazard and adventure, but on further consideration I decided to set out. I had as yet seen next to nothing of French Africa. If I failed to find my former acquaintance, I should, at any rate, traverse an unknown and curious region. The weather was fine, my health was of the best, and two weeks of holiday still remained at my disposal. Far better to spend them in exhilarating enterprise than on the hot, fashionable boulevards of what may now be called Brighton in Barbary.

Everything went well. The bit of railway on the line to Constantine ran through charming scenery. I was fortunate enough to secure a good seat outside the diligence. The eight-hours' journey was full of interest to a stranger.

What most struck me was the mixture of savagery and civilization: here brand-new, state-constructed French villages, with a toy-like town hall, school house, and police station, the tricolor flying everywhere; there, in close juxtaposition, a collection of Bedouin tents, the dark-skinned, wild-looking population, with their flocks and herds, recalling Biblical scenes. On all sides the vegetation was magnificent, olives being evidently the chief crop.

The diligence stopped at last, and as night was at hand I took up my quarters in the post-house, a straggling, comfortless, dingy inn, where, however, I obtained a decent bed and a good supper.

On inspecting the stables, I found that anything in the shape of a fairly comfortable carriage was out of the question. I hired instead a couple of the best horses to be had, engaged the services of a retired soldier as guide, and soon after sunrise next day was on my way.

"Do you know a gentleman named Basilio living in these parts?" I asked of my conductor.

"Who does not?" was the reply. "He is worth a million."

"Is he married? Has he children?"

"Pleasure is his wife; his gold-pieces are his family. You will see what a splendid place he has built in these deserts."

Very desert-like and solitary indeed was the region we had now entered upon. Again and again we were obliged to cross a wide river-bed, in places dry, in others the water up to our horses' flanks, the steep banks glowing with oleanders in full bloom.

Far and wide stretched the rocky waste; here and there groves of the silvery-green olive and golden palm breaking the brown monotony. At rare intervals we came upon some little oasis, the walled-in premises of an ostrich farmer enterprising enough to settle amid such solitudes; around his fortified encampments, slopes of vineyard, olive orchard, and pasture.

Toward noon we reached a little inn, and, as the heat was intense, rested an hour or two, my companion assuring me that we should reach our destination before nightfall. There was no help for it, then. My acquaintance of ten years before might have forgotten me. He would be compelled to offer me hospitality.

I reassured myself with the reflection that no visit could well wear the look of an intrusion in such circumstances. Even the face of an enemy must surely be welcome at this world's end.

It was twilight when, hungry and tired, we came in sight of the house, a large, handsome structure, in the style of a modern château and surrounded, as all country houses are in Algeria, by a lofty wall. Outside that inclosure were park-like glades and shrubberies; within, flower gardens, fountains, aviaries, all most beautifully kept.

The aspect of the place was not that of a bachelor's home. Every window blazed with cheerful light; servants bustled hither and thither; and as we rode up to the front door, two smart Arab grooms ran forward to seize the bridles, as if we were expected. It was evident that some kind of festivity was going on, and that I was supposed to be an invited guest.

While I stood hesitating as to what course to pursue —how best to frame an excuse for an untimely intrusion—I heard the well-remembered accent of my old acquaintance. Having warmly received two visitors arrived just before, he now turned to myself, all hospitality and preoccupation. "I offer many apologies for this unexpected appearance," I said. "I am an

Englishman—you may remember our meeting years ago—Fletcher by name—Vincent Fletcher—and happening to be in Algeria——"

"You are most heartily welcome," he exclaimed. "I receive many visits from your countrymen on their way to Constantine. I am delighted to show them the country. Excuse me——"

Here he greeted another new-comer.

"The fact is," he added, "I am to-night entertaining a large hunting party, and my mind is distracted by a thousand details. Hamed, conduct this gentleman to a bedroom. Let me see—the west room is unoccupied, and see that his attendant and horses are well cared for. In a quarter of an hour the bell will ring for dinner," he added; then, with a pleasant smile and second handshake, he left me in charge of the Arab servant.

The dining-room in which the large company assembled a little later presented a brilliant scene.

I found my host surrounded by his friends, and only won a friendly nod from him before we sat down to table.

Well, I said to myself, my explanation, such as it was, would keep! When a man has built himself a palace on the confines of the desert, he evidently needs no letters introductory from chance visitors. A chance partaker of his splendor is only too welcome. So I took my place, bowed to my table companions, and resolved to enjoy the altogether unexpected turn of affairs. We numbered upward of twenty in all, the party being composed of two Arab chiefs, a couple of French officers, a cheery old priest, and several sunburnt colonists and civilians—evidently the doctor, notary, and magistrate of the nearest town.

Everybody seemed to be in my own case—that is to say, desperately hungry; and during the first half-hour the chief accompaniment to the banquet was the clatter of knives and forks.

When the first imperative calls of hunger were satisfied, I glanced at my host.

While ten years had outwardly much changed myself, most likely past recognition, he remained the same. My own hair had taken a silvery gleam; his close-cut beard and curly locks were still black as ever. A slim

stripling, I had grown portly; he seemed hardly to have gained a quarter of an inch in breadth.

Yet as I studied his physiognomy I perceived an alteration—of what nature I could not define—but change was there. And the more and more I became familiar with my former acquaintance, the more clearly did I recognize it. The candid, almost lethargic expression, the amiable yieldingness of early years, had given way to a certain hardness and cynicism, also to a certain reserve that had been wholly wanting in the Constant Adolf Basilio of ten years before. Excess of good-fortune had turned my frank, ingenuous companion into a voluptuary.

The banquet had now become more animated; sparkling wine circulated freely. Amid the Babel of voices, it was almost impossible to make one's own heard. Yet I was conscious of interchanging a few commonplaces with my neighbor, the abbé.

All this time my gaze was fascinated to the other end of the table. I could not help glancing furtively at this enigmatic host—the same man, yet not the same, known so well during that snow-bound imprisonment at Marseilles.

As I watched him, without appearing to do so, an incident, trivial in itself, made my heart beat quickly. The master of the house, in rapidly moving his glass, had come in contact with the sharp edge of a knife as the servant was removing it. I think my own eyes were the only ones to observe what followed. A tiny crimson drop now rose to the surface of the fourth finger of his left hand!

Horror-stricken at the revelation, I yet mastered myself sufficiently to ask the old priest:

"Is it long, may I ask, Monsieur l'Abbé, since you have been in these regions—since you have known our host?"

"This is the fourteenth year of my ministration in Africa," he replied. "I was the first to welcome the young heir to his new home."

"Did he arrive unaccompanied—without any relation?" I contrived to get out.

"He was unhappily—or perhaps happily for himself—alone in the world," was the answer. "That is to

say, if any one can be so called who inherits a million."

I was now past reasoning with myself. Utterly regardless of the consequences, only mindful of the foul plot I had just unravelled, of the unhappy youth whose place was filled by his murderer, I rose to my feet, and by a wild, almost a superhuman effort, commanded silence.

"Fellow-guests," I cried, "this is no hour for feast or rejoicing! Ask him to whose board you have been bidden what he has done with the real Constant Adolf Basilio! This is no jest," I added, facing the guilty man, "but solemn earnest. That red spot on the fourth finger of your left hand, that drop of blood just now surreptitiously wiped away, has betrayed you. I knew your unhappy namesake well. I can prove to one and all here assembled that long before setting out for Africa, the fourth finger on his left hand had been replaced by a waxen substitute. What was his fate, what happened after I bade him adieu at Marseilles on the 23d of January, 1869, shall be my business to learn."

* * * * * *

True enough, after a long and laborious trial, now celebrated in the criminal annals of the French colony, the mystery was brought to light and the fictitious Basilio to justice. He was condemned to life-long imprisonment for having caused the death of his half-brother by drowning off the coast of Marseilles, just after my departure.

They had quitted the hotel with their baggage early in the day on which the steamer started for Algiers, but on that same morning, it transpired that two young West Indian gentlemen had hired a boat in the harbor for a row. Only one returned, the explanation being given that the other had alighted at a certain point, preferring to walk back. As the movements of the pair concerned none but themselves, the fact that two had quitted the hotel and only one embarked passed unnoticed. The rest of the scheme was easy of accomplishment, not a soul in the African colony knowing either the real heir to the property or his double.

This story of a young woman, a boy, and a song, with its tender pathos, was written for the New York *Sunday World* by Edith Sessions Tupper.

HER "FRESH-AIR" BOY.

"I MUST go and find him," she murmured absently as she dabbed more powder on her nose and held the silver-mounted hand-glass to the light that she might see the effect. "I really must go and find that poor child. I suppose," she continued as she drew on her pearl-tinted gloves, "I suppose he looks for me every day and wonders why I don't come to set him up in business—poor little fellow. Yes, I will go to-morrow. No, I can't. There is Mrs. Cornelia Chinchilla's luncheon and Belle Bandoline's tea. Wednesday I have my riding lesson and there's the matinée, and Thursday —oh, dear! I cannot go this week, but I must try and slip in a day soon to hunt that little fellow up."

So the next week she selected an afternoon to give over to the search for her "fresh-air" boy. But Mrs. Manhattan Fadd gave a luncheon that very afternoon, so the trip to the East Side was once more postponed. She felt guilty as she sipped the maraschino from her orange cup. For an instant she saw him again with his pale face, hungry eyes, and tow head, as he came rushing out of the kitchen door at her aunt's farm-house with his hands full of red-clover tops.

He had been singing at the top of his shrill voice, "She's my sweetheart, I'm her beau; she's my Annie, I'm her Joe," and in a spirit of fun the young lady from New York had taken up the refrain of "Annie Rooney." So delighted was the fresh-air boy to find she could sing "Annie Rooney" that he gave her his bouquet of clover-tops and thenceforth attached himself to her, following her about like a little dog. They were both from New York and both could sing "Annie Rooney."

"Dick," she had said to him one day, "when I go back to New York I'm coming to see you, and I'm going to set you up in business as a newsboy."

She moved uneasily as she remembered the look that flashed on the boy's face—a look that transfigured

it—but fresh ices were served just then, and the boy, the meadow, and her promise were forgotten.

Weeks later she found herself in a dingy alley on the East Side, looking for No. 188. She was a little frightened and more disgusted at her surroundings. "What an idiot I am to bother coming to this frightful place, looking for a boy who may be dead for all I know," she muttered, drawing up her dainty skirts from the filth of the street: "188—there it is—horrible place—shall probably have my throat cut before I leave." Through a narrow passageway, across a dingy court, up a squalid stairway she went.

"Is this where the Camwell family lives?" she asked as she tapped on the half-opened door. The room was filled with slattern, frowsy, wild-eyed women, who glared at the wonderful vision.

"Yis, ma'am."

"I want to see Dick—Dick Camwell."

There is a bustle—a murmur—and a woman, with eyes swollen from weeping, comes forward.

"I'm Dick's mother," she said. "Dick's dead."

"Dead—good heavens! you don't mean it. When?"

"Last night—fever. You're the lady he was lookin' fer?"

"Looking for— Oh! did he look for me?"

"Look fer ye, ma'am? There hain't been a day sence September that the boy didn't look fer ye. 'She'll come to-day, sure,' he'd say, an' then he'd go down to the street an' stand there whistlin' 'Little Annie Rooney.' I says to him, 'Dick, why don't ye whistle something else? I'm sick of that song,' but, says he, 'No, I shan't whistle nothin' else, fer she liked that.'

She stepped into the low, bare room where he lay on the miserable bed. The tears fell fast as she took the bunch of violets from her breast and laid them in his poor thin hands. "Forgive me, Dick," she whispered.

* * * * * *

The strains of "Little Annie Rooney" rang out on the soft air. A smart maid came out from the brown-stone house and handed the amazed Italian fifty cents.

"My lady sends you this if you'll move on, and next time you come around don't, for gracious' sake, play that tune, for she can't bear the sound of it."

In a minor key. A love story, in which it is shown that victory, as well as defeat, may bring unhappiness, and that revenge is a dangerous business. By Alan Adair in *Murray's Magazine.*

THE VIOLIN'S STORY.

It had such a curious way of telling its story, this old Italian violin. At first, when it began to speak, the listeners could hear only vague sounds which trembled, moaned indistinctly. But ever and again there arose a whole wave of harmonies that formed themselves into words which were comprehended by some, but not by all, for the highest and most beautiful things in the world need translation before they can be understood by the commonplace. It is only the nightingales that understand what it is that the nightingales sing.

But at last all heard one word—Cremona—and, as they heard it, they caught a glimmering of what Cremona must have been in the bygone, long-dead days, even before this violin had taken form. Cremona! city of music—city of love—of impassioned strains and long-drawn sighs—city of workers and toilers for the perfecting of instruments with which to make perfect music! That one word told of the soul these men had put into their art—yea, of the love they bore it. It was as if every string strung in the city of music vibrated with the sound of that one word—"Cremona."

I was born at Cremona, said the Violin. I would you could have seen our workshop. For centuries it had been the birthplace of the world-famed, world-admired violins. I myself am but a latter-day descendant of the old race, possessing none of the qualities of my ancestors save the accumulated knowledge that each true artist brings to the perfecting of his craft. Knowledge is the world's great inheritance, a patrimony that each son of the earth may enjoy.

But to return to the house wherein was our workshop. It was tall, many-storied, with high gables and narrow windows that overlooked a court-yard, in the

centre of which stood a fountain, or rather a well; before the noonday heats and after the sun had gone down, the women used to come with their high earthen pitchers and gossip and sing, awaiting their turn to fill their pitchers. And the songs they sang floated in to us on the warm perfumed air, and the violins learned them so that they knew music even before they were made. I tell you every particle of a violin must feel music within it, if the violin is to make it.

It was such a pretty sight, this court-yard with its white uneven flagstones, and its pots of oleanders and orange trees, and the great vine crawling up the house-side like a serried throng of lusty soldiers up a mountain-steep. But women were needed to make the picture complete, and there were mostly women there, for, besides those that came to fetch water, there were some who lived in the houses that formed three sides of the square court-yard, which had but one narrow egress.

These women were mostly washerwomen by profession, and their variegated clothes, hung out to dry in the wind, made a stir of life in the sleepy court-yard. Besides these there was one other woman, the keeper of the fruit-stall, and her fruits made a fine patch of color in the most shadowy corner.

Here it was that the apprentices, who were not always as eager to work as Messer Antonio, came to quench their thirst with the ripe, luscious fruit, so temptingly displayed. I knew many of them, for it takes a long time for a violin to become matured, and it is one of the apprentices whose story I will tell.

It was in the beginning of June. Messer Antonio, with his sleeves well tucked up, was putting a touch of varnish on a violin. He was so sunburned that the golden varnish almost seemed to be of the same color as his long arms and his great hands that touched the violin so lightly and tenderly.

A woman was crossing the court-yard, tall and stately, with a dignified walk that seemed to give the lie to the peasant's dress she wore. A little child, hardly able to walk, was clinging to the shapely yet labor-marked hand. The little fingers closed so firmly round the mother's that it seemed the child knew by the contact alone how great was the support the mother could give.

The woman looked up at our house, as if in bygone days she had known it well. She seemed irresolute and strangely timid. She hesitated a long time before she took courage to enter.

It was the hour of noonday rest and the apprentices had all dispersed. Messer Antonio alone remained working. He always loved to apply those cunning touches of his when he was quite by himself; the idle chatter of his workmen, who were young and giddy, disturbed him. He, having so great a reverence for his art, loved to practise it in silence and alone, and I for one could not wonder at it.

I heard the woman's step on the stairs. I think she must have been carrying the little one, for I heard only one footfall, but at the threshold she paused and I heard a sound as if the little one had been placed on its feet.

Then the door opened, and I felt a tremulous excitement creep over me. Messer Antonio seemed to hear nothing, but worked on steadily, evidently much satisfied with his results, for there was a contented smile upon his face that meant, "It is well done."

The woman entered, holding her child to her closely. She was pale under the sunburn on her cheeks, but she advanced quite steadily, and came within a yard of Messer Antonio. He looked up suddenly and gave a great start; the ruddy color forsook his face; he let fall his dearly-loved violin. It fell with a great clatter, and he gave a hoarse cry of "Maddalena!" but there was nothing soft, nothing pitiful in the cry; rather, one would have said, a curse than a cry.

She fell down on her knees, as the peasant women do before the image of our Blessed Lady that stands at the corner of the court-yard, and stretched out her hands in supplication; but he neither spoke nor moved.

Then—"Father!" she cried appealingly.

He looked at her angrily and the great veins of his forehead stood out like cords, and the hot, passionate blood mounted to his face, and he cried roughly: "What do you here?"

Then she answered almost softly: "I crave forgiveness and mercy, father."

"I do not know them," he answered coldly, and would

have turned from her; but she took hold of her little one and pushed it toward him.

"Forgiveness for me and mercy for my child," she said; but the little one, seeing its mother on her knees, plucked at her gown and looked defiantly at the man who was frightening her.

Messer Antonio turned an angry look upon the child, but in some wonderful fashion a little softening smile crept into the hard lines of his mouth.

"What do you here?" he asked again, but a little less roughly. "Did I not bid you go with your accursed husband since you chose to wed him? I told you I would never look upon your face again. Is he dead, that you have come back to me?"

He said this so brutally one would not have recognized Messer Antonio.

"He is dead," she answered quietly, but with a great despair in her voice that made every word she uttered seem like a knife-thrust. "Dead to me—he has left me!"

"Left you?" There was a fiendish glee on Messer Antonio's face. "Left you!—and you have come to me!"

"Listen," she said breathlessly, and rose from her knees and confronted her father. "Let me speak! I will confess at once that you were right and I was wrong. You told me he was a ne'er-do-well, a scoundrel, a beggar who married me because I was a rich man's daughter; and I—I who loved him as women love in hell—tell you that you were right. He was all you said and more. He was so bad, so cowardly, so devilishly cruel that I would sell my soul to be revenged on him!" She stamped her foot as if she could not express her anger sufficiently in any other way, and the great, passionate tears rained from her eyes. "But I can do nothing! I am a helpless woman with a little child. Therefore I come to you, not on account of the love you have ceased to bear me, but for revenge. You were always revengeful, and I bring you Filippo. I give him to you! He is my darling; the apple of my eye; the very all of me; and I bring him to you to make of him my avenger. Do what you will with him. Here he is—but avenge me!"

She spoke in short, sharp breaths, panting with anger; but at the end she exhausted herself. She would have fallen prone to the ground had not Messer Antonio caught her and laid her, not ungently, on the wooden bench which the apprentices used. He was silent for a moment and stood with bent head pondering over her words.

I do not think it was emotion that subdued him, but a little wonder at the suddenness of the whole thing.

"If this is the reason of your coming, Maddalena, you are welcome," he said at last; and this is how Filippo, a little curly-haired child, came among us. But as for Maddalena, she would not stay.

"I do not come as a beggar," she answered Messer Antonio, self-reliantly, when he spoke some words of protest at her departure. "I can work—I do work. I could not come back here and eat your bread after you had cursed me and bidden me begone from your presence; and"—with a sudden gush of feeling that melted the rigid lines in her face—"I could not return here and live here, where I dreamed my girlish, fond dreams of happiness with him! The very stones in the court-yard would seem to jeer at me! A thousand stinging memories would crowd in upon me to madden me. No, I could not live here, but I will leave Filippo to you, if you like! Bring him up in ignorance of me! Swear to me that you will make of him an instrument to avenge me!"

And now she turned to go. "Good-by, father," she said, and a great tremor shook her sonorous voice. She stooped and lifted little Filippo in her arms, clasped him to her breast with hungry ferocity, and kissed him as though she would have left her life upon his lips; but Filippo, not understanding, burst into a passion of childish tears. "You will be kind to him," said Maddalena huskily. Then I noticed that Messer Antonio was standing with his huge back turned toward us all, and that his voice was very thick when he answered, almost gently, "I will do my duty by him."

And many a day and oft have I seen Maddalena stand at the corner of the court-yard, there where the shadows lie the thickest, to catch a glimpse of Filippo as he passed; and once when he was playing among

the children I saw her snatch him up and cover him with kisses. My heart went out to her, poor hungry-eyed mother, poor deserted wife! but I could not make my sympathy known to her—which is the way of the world, you see. Those who suffer most say least; those who wish to speak find the words wanting. They are like I was then, a violin without strings.

And after some time Maddalena came no more, and I could but conjecture that the fire and grief within her had consumed her.

* * * * * *

The years went on and I would scarcely have marked their passing had not Filippino grown into Filippo, that is to say, from a curly-haired, chubby-cheeked child into a slender, brown-skinned boy, and then into the most beautiful of youths. There are few things on earth as lovely to look upon as he was, and when he grew old enough to sit with the other apprentices on the long bench and learn Messer Antonio's craft, there was none to compare with him in beauty of person or in the deftness which he showed in the making of violins. He put his soul into his work, as, indeed, every artist should; and he possessed, too, the loveliest voice that had ever been given to mortal man. When he sang his voice sounded like a thousand strings in unison. There were tones in it that reminded me of the sound of church bells, which floats in through the open windows and brings with it its divine message of peace. There was a solemnity and yet a gayety in it that told of a reflective mind and of a gay young heart.

But the strangest thing of all was that Messer Antonio, who could not but love the lad, yet hated to hear him sing; this was all the more curious as he was so gifted a musician that it seemed to me as if all true music must needs have been delight in his ears.

As I have said, many years passed, and nothing of any importance happened until one day a bearded stranger entered who greeted Messer Antonio as if he had been acquainted with him in bygone days.

"You do not recognize me," he said; "yet, Messer Antonio, I was once an apprentice here, and it is to you I owe the renown I have gained. I am Giuseppe Nardi, whose violins almost rival yours."

Messer Antonio looked right glad to see him. "You are a great honor to me," he said. "I am always proud of you. Are you well—and married?"

Nardi shook his head. "No," he said sombrely. "I told you then, I tell you now, life ended for me when she left us."

Messer Antonio stood silent for a little while, and then he pointed to Filippo, who sat among the apprentices. None of them, so much in awe were they of their master, durst lift their eyes from their work.

"That is Maddalena's son," he said. Giuseppe Nardi gave a great start.

"Her son?" he said. "Then where is she? Was she not happy, my beloved one—tell me, for pity's sake, she is not dead?"

"I do not know," answered Messer Antonio slowly, "whether she be alive or dead. Seventeen years ago she brought me her little one, brought him to me with but one desire, that I should educate him to avenge her. That villain, her husband, still lives, and Filippo shall be taught revenge when he is man enough to understand it. It is no boy's revenge, but a man's that we need; in two years he will be twenty-one, and then my day will be at hand."

Giuseppe looked at Messer Antonio. "That is very wrong," he said gravely. "Maestro, he is a beautiful youth and deft with his hands. Make of him a useful man—you have made me one—and forego your revenge."

"He is only an instrument to me," said Messer Antonio; "he means nothing but the dagger with which to stab a traitor. What! have you forgotten Maddalena? Had you seen her seventeen years ago, you would not have spoken of forgiveness—for him."

"Have I forgotten her?" asked Nardi. He had such a pleasant voice, it was good to listen to it, even when it rang out sharp, laden with poignant regret. "Does my life not prove that I have never forgotten her? Yet my every thought is of the past joyous days, when I was young, and loved, and fancied myself beloved! But this boy now—with the golden light in his eyes—why should he not be a happy man and a stay to your old age?"

"My old age requires no stay," said the Maestro, and drew himself up proudly; and indeed he seemed so vigorous that it was almost an absurdity to talk of old age to him.

Nardi sighed. "I wish I could persuade you," he said.

"But you cannot," answered Messer Antonio. "No one, as you well know, has ever succeeded in diverting me from any purpose. I am too old to change now."

"May I speak to the lad?"

"As much as you like!"

Then Nardi walked over to the apprentices' bench and held out his hand to Filippo. "I used to sit here when I was young, and—I knew your mother, Filippo. I want you to remember that if ever you want a friend you have but to come or to send to Giuseppe Nardi, of Florence. I will always help you for the sake of bygone days."

The young man looked up in surprise.

"I thank you, sir," he answered, "and will think of your words, and if anything happen to make me require friendly aid I will come to you."

"That is right, my lad," said Nardi heartily, but he turned away with something like a sigh. He said good-by to Messer Antonio, left, but returned of a sudden. "The singer Brondoni," he asked under his breath, "is the man—is he not? Remember, I never knew aught, save that I had lost her."

"Yes," answered Messer Antonio fiercely, "that is the cursed villain!"

"Can the lad sing?"

"Yes."

"You will make him his father's rival on the stage, then?"

"I had never thought of that. I had a far more vulgar way of snuffing him out—but you are a man of invention."

"I wish you would forego this revenge."

"I will die first," said Messer Antonio, and he spoke as if he meant it.

The next occurrence that impressed me with a sense of importance was of a much softer character—indeed, it was what was then—ay, and always will be—the love-

liest thing in a world brimful of lovely things to me—namely, a pair of young lovers, very young, very shy, feeling love for the first time, so ignorant of love itself that they scarce knew it had come to them. Words were few between them; yet there was a subtle language, spoken by their eyes and even by the movement of their hands that was most eloquent. I was so happy to be a witness of it, for though I had an intuition that there was something called love in the world, yet I had never seen it. I knew of vague yearnings, dim longings—a confused medley of sounds that needed but one thing to make them into music. I knew of all that ever since I came into being, only it was all so difficult to me, and of a sudden all grew quite clear. That was when first I saw Filippo and the little Maria, whom I had seen grow up from childhood into shy girlhood, together.

Maria was the daughter of the woman who kept the fruit stall which the apprentices patronized, and she had always been so pretty that she was a joy to look at. Her tawny curls ran riot over her forehead, clung to the arch of her eyebrows, and strayed down from her head to dance on her shoulder. It used to remind me of a beautiful silken net in which birds might be snared. I think that neither Filippo, nor I, nor she herself dreamed that she was approaching womanhood until this very afternoon I speak of.

It was mid-Lent. Messer Antonio had given his apprentices leave to enjoy themselves as they saw fit on this one holiday plucked from amid the sombre fast days. All of them were away carousing, save Filippo, who, having the love of his craft strong in him, was intent on shaping a beautiful piece of seasoned wood. I heard a timid rap at the door, and when Filippo had cried "Come in," I know not who was the more surprised, he or Maria, when the latter entered.

"I have come to see Messer Antonio," said the girl shyly. "Mother sent me to ask concerning the rent. It has been told us that the landlord wishes to increase it, and, indeed, we are too poor to pay more."

"I know nothing of it," answered Filippo. "Messer Antonio does not confide in any one, but I hope he will not increase your rent. He is quite rich enough as it

is; he has no one belonging to him in this world to whom he could leave his money." Now I knew that Filippo was ignorant of his relationship to Messer Antonio. "But he is not in the house just now. Will you sit down and wait?"

"Thank you," answered the girl simply, and Filippo pulled out the bench on which the apprentices sat and made room for her. I think it must have been the first time in his life that he noticed how pretty she was, for he looked at her with much attention, so much so that the girl blushed and finally asked him, "Why are you looking at me?"

Filippo smiled. He knew far too little of women to feel shy with them.

"I will tell you why," he answered. "In the church of San Giovanni there is a picture of the Blessed Virgin, and when you took this seat you had the same beautiful serene look that charms me so in her."

"You should not compare me to the Blessed Virgin."

"Why not?" asked Filippo. "Indeed, Maria, I do it in all reverence."

She made no answer, but her dusky cheek grew hot with vermilion blushes.

Filippo worked on a little while, but presently laid down his tools and seated himself next to Maria on the bench. "I am sorry about the rent," he said. "Are you quite sure Messer Antonio does intend to increase it?"

"I fear so, and then I know not what we shall do, for here you see we are well known, and each morning the apprentices buy fruit from us because we are near —but so they would from any stranger, and our place would soon be filled up; but we—we must go out into the world and starve, for indeed we are too poor to pay more."

"You must not go away," said Filippo softly, with a little emphatic stress on the "you" that made the girl blush again.

"Ah!" she said shyly, "I know you would help us, but how can you? Messer Antonio is a hard man."

"He is a very just man," answered the lad gravely, "and if you will let me, I will plead your cause for you."

"Will you?" she asked joyously. "I should be so grateful. I am a little, only a very little, afraid of him, you know. I do not understand him."

Filippo smiled. "I do not fear him at all," he said. "He is always good to me."

"Then I will go," she said; but she showed no great alacrity.

"Why?" asked Filippo. "See, I am here quite alone, and would be so happy if you would stay with me a little longer."

"My mother will want me."

"Your mother can have you always, while I have naught but this little stolen half-hour of you. Do you know that since you have left off your childish garments I have never had much talk with you, although I have seen you daily?"

"But did you ever want to talk to me?"

"Oh, yes," cried Filippo, "very often! I know a great deal about you. It seems to me that I know what things you would like and what you would dislike. Sometimes when we make a beautiful violin I long to show it you, and, again, when a song takes my fancy, I long to sing it to you."

"You think of me so much, then?" asked little Maria shyly. "I never thought you noticed me at all. You always walk through the court-yard so proudly and never stop to chatter like the other apprentices. It always makes me so unhappy, for I wondered how I could have angered you; but, of course, I could not tell."

"So you thought of me, too?" questioned Filippo, and he drew almost imperceptibly nearer to her and looked into her eyes for his answer.

"Of course I thought of you, too," said Maria, "for though you passed us by so proudly, I knew you had a friendly feeling for me."

"Only a friendly feeling?"

Maria blushed. "I do not know," she stammered; then, seeing that Filippo had drawn nearer to her and was looking for his answer: "How can I tell what men feel?" she asked.

"Ah!" answered Filippo, "it seems to me you could easily tell what I feel, for you know that whenever I

have met you, my eyes have sought yours and have tried to express everything that my mouth dared not, and you were not ill pleased, I know."

And then there fell between the twain a few moments of delicious silence. Maria's eyes were downcast. Filippo was trying to put into words a new conviction that had come upon him, but for a long time he could not. At last he said, with a certain awkward hesitation that did not sit ungracefully on him:

"Maria, had you ever dreamed of loving any one?"

Maria looked up startled; her eyes gave a sudden flash. "I do not know," she murmured.

But Filippo scarcely heeded her answer.

"Because I have—often!" he cried, with growing passion. "I have dreamed of it all through the summer nights and winter days. Whenever I have heard anything that was beautiful, anything that was good, I have known that love must needs be like it, and even more divine. And now, Maria, I know that my dreams of what love must be are true, and that it is you whom I love."

He had knelt down beside her and reverently taken her hand in his. The two young heads were very close together, each pair of burning eyes looking into the other's, and suddenly, as if by magic, their mouths met, and ere either of them had realized the other's action their lips were clinging in a first lover's kiss.

"You must be my little wife, Maria," whispered Filippo, and she dropped her head on his shoulder like a flower on its stem, but said nothing.

Then suddenly there was heard a great clatter up the stone stairs.

"The landlord!" gasped poor little Maria, and without another word she sped down the stairs, through the court-yard, and hid herself within the shelter of her mother's house.

"Was that not the little Maria who ran past me down the stairs? She was like a little whirlwind. What brought her?"

Messer Antonio was evidently in great good-humor. He was not looking at Filippo when he asked the question, but when the lad answered he turned around sharply.

"She and her mother had heard a rumor that you intended increasing their rent. I hope it is not so." It was only the sound of his voice, only the tremulousness in it, the tender way in which the "she" fell from the lad's lips, and yet Messer Antonio knew. His ruddy cheek turned pale. He faced the lad suddenly and looked at him fixedly.

"Whew!" he said—a long-drawn whistle, and that was all. Messer Antonio cruelly waited for Filippo to speak first.

"I hope you will not be hard on them, sir, for I love her and have asked her to be my wife." He said it quite boldly; it was true that he did not fear Messer Antonio. It seemed to me that the old man was making a mental calculation as to what course he should take. He did not look very pleasant when he said:

"You are very young, Filippo."

"I shall grow older," said the lad. "Besides, everything is so vague as yet. We should not want to marry for a long time. My wage is not sufficient."

"Oh!" quoth Messer Antonio, with a sigh of relief. "Listen to me. Of course, it is nothing to me; you are not bound to do my wishes. Gratitude counts for nothing in this world, and you are your own master. But this very day I made some arrangements which I thought might please you. They will not interfere with your matrimonial engagements, in which, of course, you can please yourself entirely. Everybody manages his own marriage—mismanages, I might say. But if you will follow my advice, you could far better afford to keep a wife in a little while than by working out your time with me. For the matter of that, you were never properly apprenticed and are an independent workman. Well, Filippo, to begin the matter, you have a money-making machine in that throat of yours in the shape of a beautiful voice."

Filippo looked up much surprised. "Why, I thought you hated to hear me sing, sir."

"But you have a fine voice, nevertheless," answered Messer Antonio dryly. "The best tenor in Italy, I think, when it is cultivated, which it shall be by the finest master in the world. Now do not thank me. I have private reasons for what I do—a grudge which I

owe to Brondoni, the tenor whom I want supplanted. He thinks he can sing, the vain fool! Why, every note he sings rings false, as only a villain's notes can sound, and he shall be hissed off the stage yet, and 'tis you who shall show the people what singing means!"

"Can I do that?"

"You can—you shall; you are a musician. And as for that little revenge of mine, it need not concern you. Play into my hands, that is all; and as for the little Maria, it will be a proud day for her when she is the great tenor's wife!"

Filippo looked as if the news were too good to be true. With a sudden impulse he seized Messer Antonio's toil-worn hands and kissed them.

"I will do all you tell me, sir," he cried, "and I will work for your sake and for my Maria's!"

"That is right," answered the old man. "I trust you, Filippo; remember that you do not disappoint me."

And now there must be a little gap in my narrative, for I was presently pronounced to be a finished instrument and removed to the keeping of a most excellent musician, and so was at last permitted to make music, which needs must be the greatest desire of a violin.

We were all much excited on the evening of which I am about to tell you, for there was to be the first representation of a great work by the famous master, Gluck. There was always a great feeling against German music in Italy, and it was with difficulty that this work was allowed to be performed. I had been with my master to rehearsals, and had been delighted with a certain tenor whom all men called Filippo Filippino, but whom I knew to be my own dear Filippo, who was singing a part which has since been sung by women, so fresh was his voice. And all along I heard great discussions as to how "Brondoni" would take his dismissal from his post of first tenor in the world. Of course my knowledge that Brondoni was none other than Filippo's father added great piquancy to this performance. It seemed to me that no one knew it except myself, and I counted for nothing, for I was but a violin in the orchestra—one voice among many; but

for all that I knew a good deal, and looked forward with no small excitement to the evening's performance.

Well, it is divine music—we all know that—and as for my Filippo, he was perfect. I had looked around for Messer Antonio, and sure enough I had found him, radiant, glowing with pride, and next to him, in the full charm of her young womanhood, sat Maria.

"Dear lad! He has been faithful to her, then," I thought with satisfaction, for Maria's presence with Messer Antonio was a sure sign that Filippo was still her betrothed, if not her husband.

The first part went superbly. Filippo surpassed himself; and then suddenly there arose, I know not whence, a sinister rumor. It was whispered first among the musicians in the orchestra—whispered by some with horror, by others with derisive smiles and shrugs; and when the curtain was over-long in rising I knew the report must have reached Filippo, and the rumor was—"Brondoni has stabbed himself!"

It came upon me like a thunderbolt. Did Messer Antonio know? I wondered that he sat there so erect, so sure of himself, so proud of Filippo's success, and then I trembled at the horror of it all, for it meant that through the son's instrumentality the father had made away with himself. It was so horrible. My poor, unsuspecting Filippo singing away so lustily for art's sake, for Maria's sake, for love's sake; all the time an instrument of revenge—himself innocent of all revenge.

I thought of Giuseppe Nardi. Forego revenge," he had said. And then I remembered Messer Antonio's answer: "I am too old to be diverted from my purpose," and it seemed to me that the world had become more jangled and out of tune than ever, and that no amount of striving could ever put it right.

Yes, the news travelled to Messer Antonio, for he had become impatient of the delay, had asked the reason, and had learned it. I saw the ruddy color leave his cheeks, the sunken eyes flare up, and then suddenly he sank back in his seat, an inert mass. Most likely the horror of it had burst upon him; perhaps for the first time he realized that he had made of the son the father's murderer.

Maria's thoughts were revealed in her face. Her

anxious eyes gazed at the curtain. Doubtless she was impatient to witness her lover's further triumph, and a little anxious withal lest aught should ail him. Presently there was commotion on the stage behind the curtain. Filippo's young voice rang out lustily, louder than any other.

"Of course we will continue; why not? I am sorry, of course; but why should Brondoni's death stop us? A man should learn to take defeat. It is only cowards who kill themselves!" said the bold voice, whose owner had never known what it was to suffer a day's unhappiness. "And he was not worth much—Messer Antonio always said he was a villain!"—there seemed to me almost a cry of exultation over the defeated and dead singer.

"Oh, hush—I pray you hush!" said another voice in an agonized whisper.

The curtain was still down, and we of the orchestra could hear, but not the audience.

"I will not hush!" said Filippo impatiently. Perhaps the thought of his beautiful sweetheart, and how she had come to enjoy his success, made him a little ruthless. "Are we to stop a whole performance because a man has killed himself, Nardi?"

Then I felt a little relieved, for I remembered that Nardi knew, and would tell the lad in the gentlest manner why it was that he, of all singers, must sing no more that night.

"You must stop!" said Nardi firmly.

"You are mad!" cried Filippo. "Leave the stage, Nardi, and ring the curtain up."

Then I knew that he must be told, and at once. I heard Nardi say again:

"You must not, Filippo! You, of all men, must not sing."

"Why I?" cried Filippo furiously. "Why I, of all men? What was Brondoni to me that I must not sing because he is dead?"

There was a little pause, and it seemed to me as if Filippo even must have begun to suspect something, for his voice was hoarse when he whispered, "Speak!"

"He was your father," said Nardi simply.

"You lie!" was the answer, in sharp, decisive tones.

"It is God's truth," answered Nardi. "He was my rival. We both loved Maddalena, Messer Antonio's daughter—your mother. He won her, married her, and deserted her; and this is Messer Antonio's revenge."

"Do you know what it is you are saying?" cried the lad. "Do you know that I have this man's blood on my head, and that, if he is my father, I have killed my father? Do you know that I have worked to supplant him, that my one aim was to show the people what a worthless singer he was, that I have driven him to his death, and you tell me quietly he is my father? It is horrible—horrible!" No one spoke, and then suddenly Filippo cried, "Where is Messer Antonio—my grandfather—that I may have my revenge on him?"

"Leave revenge," said Nardi once more. "There has been too much revenge already."

And so it was that the great master Gluck's work was not performed in its entirety, and that gradually the astonished audience left the theatre, and I was sad at heart indeed and wondered what end there could be to so calamitous a story.

For a long time I heard nothing more, for Filippo never sang again. But one evening, as we came out of the dark church—there had been some grand music, and I had borne my part—into the still night air we stumbled against a monk, who was crouching in the shade of the porch, trying, it seemed to me, to hear the notes of the voluntary which the organist was playing.

"Pardon," said the monk, as we stumbled against him, and the white face, wan in the moonlight, and the voice were Filippo's; and it seemed to me not unlikely that he should have taken his sorrow and his remorse and consecrated them with himself to the service of God, not as a criminal does, but as a victim.

Of Messer Antonio and Maria, I heard that he had endowed the latter with all his wealth, and that she was about to be married to a well-known maker of violins. Poor little Maria! I suppose she was not an instrument of very fine tone herself—but then we cannot all be violins of Cremona.

A tale—in which steam and electricity play important parts—of a thrilling experience and a narrow escape. It is from *Chatter*.

A TERRIBLE RIDE.

I BEGAN life on one of the big railways as a "cleaner" in an engine-shed.

I had been employed in the shed at Louisville for about fifteen or sixteen months when I went on my first trip as a fireman.

It was very near being my last.

I firmly believe all the years of flying about in an express since I was made an engineer have not taken as much out of me as that single turn of an hour and a half. It occurred in this way:

One evening the superintendent at Louisville received a wire from Weston—a station about seventy miles down the line—to send an engine to replace one which had broken down. He came to the shed and selected the General Grant, one of the finest locomotives on the road. Then he sent word to the engineer and fireman to come on duty and start on their journey at seven o'clock.

The engineer, Ben Norris, was there in good time, and busied himself with his oil-can. But Jim West, the fireman, did not turn up punctually.

At last, when it was near the hour for starting, he came into the shed.

One glance at his bloodshot eyes and unsteady walk showed me that he was the worse for drink. Poor fellow! I knew the cause of this, and from the bottom of my heart I pitied him. The week before he had lost his little daughter Kate, and to drown his grief he had taken to liquor.

I knew he was utterly incapable of going on duty, and I also knew that if he was discovered in this state it would mean instant dismissal.

There was only one thing for it—another fireman must be found immediately. If the matter was referred to the superintendent it would be all up with my

friend Jim. From that moment I made up my mind to take his place myself.

I gave him in charge of one of my mates, who promised to take him home quietly. I thought that in a few hours he would have slept off the effects of the liquor, and I left word to have him come on by the night train to Weston. I had to explain matters to the engineer, but he made no objections to my plan. It struck me at the time that he took the matter very coolly; in fact, he seemed perfectly indifferent as to who went with him.

Time was up. I took my place in the cab. Norris set to work at once and we moved slowly out of the shed. We were off!

While in the station I took care to keep bending down, as if examining the fire, so that I should not be recognized. But once clear of the town I stood upright and looked around.

It was a glorious summer evening. We skimmed rapidly past meadows and corn-fields and then dashed along the bridge over the river. I began to think I would enjoy the run immensely.

I next turned my attention to the engine. As I ran my eye over the shining machinery I felt gratified to think that its neat order was chiefly owing to my care. I was proud of the Grant and wondered if the time would ever come when I should have charge of it myself.

I was so elated that I thought my companion ought to be more lively. Ben seemed to think of nothing but his work. He stood with his hand on the throttle and his eyes steadily fixed upon the track ahead. I made one or two remarks, but he scarcely answered me. While I was wondering at his silence he suddenly appeared to rouse himself. He glanced at the steam-gauge, muttered something which I did not understand, then bent down and examined the fire-box.

"More coal!" he cried, in a voice which almost startled me.

I complied without a word. Instead of throwing in the coal recklessly, which I knew would only deaden the fire, I piled it up carefully around the sides. Very soon the speed of the engine increased. We were rat-

tling along at a grand rate. I examined the gauge and saw that the hand pointed to 195. I could not see the necessity for this rapid travelling.

My companion's attention was again fixed upon the road before him. Presently he turned toward me and exclaimed excitedly:

"Who says that the Grant is not the fastest engine on the road?"

"Moxly declared that the President was faster," I replied.

"Then he lied!" cried Norris. "The President faster? We shall see, we shall see!"

I thought his manner very strange, to say the least of it. But I knew his ways and said nothing. He was always considered rather eccentric. Besides, he was easily excited and could not bear to be contradicted. Still, there was not an engineer on the line better acquainted with his business.

And, by the way, I have forgotten to say a word as to his appearance. Well, then, he was a big, powerful fellow, with a broad, red face and a bushy beard. It was hard to deal with such a man. If he once put his foot down there was no getting him to budge until his humor changed.

We were now coming close upon Waterford station, and had already done about twenty-five miles of the journey. Ben's eyes were still upon the track. It was all clear ahead, yet I expected to see him close the throttle and slow down while passing through the station.

But I was mistaken. With a roar and a rush we dashed right through, and the next minute we were tearing along a level stretch on the other side.

"More coal!" Not only the words themselves, but the manner in which they were uttered caused me serious alarm. I began to suspect that something was wrong. Still, if I hesitated it might only irritate him, so I flung in a small quantity.

"Go on—go on!"

What was I to do? I didn't dare to refuse. The wild look in Norris's eyes frightened me, and I went on shovelling in the fuel. I glanced at the gauge. Great heavens! it marked 230. This pressure of steam,

where no cars were attached to the engine, meant a fearful rate of speed.

The engineer's manner was strangely altered. Instead of being silent and morose he was now excited and talkative.

"That's it!" he cried, and I could barely catch the words above the roaring of the engine. "Now we're travelling! Ha! ha! The President faster than the Grant? Not likely! I'll catch up to her yet, see if I don't!"

Shall I ever forget those terrible words! They actually seemed to paralyze me. As I stood there, clinging for support to the side of the cab, the awful truth flashed through my mind. The engineer was mad! And, worse still, he was under the delusion that the President was on in front. With this insane idea in his head he determined to try the speed of the two engines.

My first impulse, when I had partly recovered from the shock, was to spring forward and grasp the reversing rod. But a moment's reflection showed me that this might instantly seal my doom. Norris would have grappled with me, and if it came to a struggle I was lost. He would fling me headlong from the engine.

Then another thought occurred to me. Heaven forgive me!—but I must strike him from behind in order to save my life. I looked around for a weapon. As I did so he seemed to guess what I was at, and turning round thrust his hand into his breast. The next moment he held a revolver toward me, while his blazing eyes threatened instant death if I did not desist.

After that I gave myself up for lost. Unless Providence interposed in my behalf a horrible end awaited me. Up to this time I had felt the heat oppressive, but now I shivered. My hands were cold and clammy. A band of iron seemed to encircle my head.

On we tore, the engine swaying fearfully. Every moment I expected to be blown to atoms by the bursting of the boiler. Norris never ceased to rave about the race with the President. And yet, though he was so absorbed in his work, he kept his eye on me the whole time.

Then it was that an idea flashed across me. A faint

hope sprang up in my mind. I must overcome him by cunning; it was the only chance.

I advanced to examine the indicator, and though my heart sank when I saw the hand quivering at 250, I made it appear as if I were delighted.

Good!" I cried, "we'll beat her yet! But we want more coal."

I made toward the tender, placed my left hand upon a lump of coal, and struck it across the back with the sharp edge of the shovel. The blow left a gash from which the blood flowed freely. I gave a cry and Norris instantly turned round.

I held up my right hand that he might see the blood dripping from it. Then I stood with my back toward him and pretended to bind up the wound. But I only wrapped a handkerchief round it, and quick as lightning drew out my pocket-book. I tore away the leaves which were written on, and placing the book upon my knee scrawled these words across the first page:

"Engineer mad. Wire; grease rails."

Then holding it in my injured hand I thrust it under my jacket and returned to the engineer's side.

We were now rapidly approaching Weston, but I knew that Norris did not intend to stop. And I was right. He blew a long whistle, as if to startle the officials, and the engine shot through the station like a rocket.

But I had managed to drop my pocket-book at the side of the track.

I did not dare to look back or make the slightest sign to the Weston officials. If I had done so I certainly would have got a bullet through me. Still I fancied I had caught a glimpse of a man hurrying forward to where the book had fallen.

The suspense was terrible. Even if they noticed the pocket-book, they might not be able to understand what was written inside; for it may be imagined that under the circumstances the scrawl was barely legible.

I had made up my mind what to expect. The next station was Red Fork, but fifteen miles farther on. I was sure the track would be clear as far as this place, but once past it we might encounter an up train at any moment.

If the Weston people discovered my message they would wire at once to Red Fork, and there would be time enough for the officials at that station to grease a portion of the rails before we came on the scene. Should this be done on any sort of an incline the wheels would slip on the track and the engine soon come to a standstill. It was with a thrill of joy I remembered that there was such a piece of road just outside Red Fork station.

But if it turned out otherwise, and we passed the place without being stopped, I resolved to lose no time in grappling with the engineer. Come what might, I would spring upon him and try to wrench the revolver from his hand. The case would then be desperate; and it was as well to die in a fight for life as to wait patiently and be mangled in a collision.

When I had arranged all this in my mind I endeavored to resign myself to fate. I could do no more at present. But the agonies I suffered during that short run from Weston to Red Fork I can never describe. The terrible strain of suspense, the wild rush, the swaying from side to side, made me feel sick and faint. I clung on without daring to look on either hand; if I had done so I think I could not have resisted the temptation to fling myself from the engine.

It was getting dusk. I was dimly conscious of hedges, telegraph poles, and bridges skimming past me like so many flashes. The hoarse shouts of the madman made my blood run cold. He seemed to be working himself into a regular frenzy.

Red Fork one mile ahead!

One minute more would decide the question of life or death.

I drew my breath hard; I trembled like a child. We had reached the incline. The engine went at it with a dash. I glanced out to see if any friendly figures were on the track.

Not a soul was in sight. I groaned and almost fell on the floor of the cab. The surrounding objects seemed to fade from my view, and in their place rose up a picture of the old home away in England. I saw the little cottage; I looked into my mother's face—

"Oh, thank God!"

Never before nor since did such a cry of joy escape me, for at that moment I felt the wheels of the engine slip.

Gradually the furious speed declined. Norris dashed about the cab storming and swearing. Very soon we were almost at a standstill. The next second I had jumped to the ground.

Only just in time. The madman had turned savagely upon me, I suppose suspecting that I had something to do with the stoppage. I saw his purpose and ducked my head as a bullet from his revolver whizzed over it. Then I ran for dear life down the track.

When I was out of range I sat upon the bank, completely overcome. The reaction was too much for me, and I believe for a minute or two I was quite unconscious. But before I became insensible I heard another report from the pistol. I knew what had happened.

I was aroused by a confused hum of voices. Upon opening my eyes I saw four men standing around me. I got up at once and we hurried back to the engine.

There stood the Grant upon the track with full speed up, the wheels revolving with frightful rapidity, but without making the least headway.

One of my companions sprang on board and shut off steam. Then he came to the side, looked down, and exclaimed:

"I say, boys, Norris has put a bullet through his brain!"

I knew it.

ROMANCE

BEING

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Sample Copy of this Number sent on receipt of 15 cents.

What was the tie between them? Perhaps it is found in the fact that they were both man-killers—and perhaps not. The sketch is by the great Frenchman Balzac. This translation is from the *Strand Magazine*.

A PASSION IN THE DESERT.

"It is a terrible sight!" she exclaimed as we left the menagerie of Monsieur Martin.

She had just been witnessing this daring showman "performing" in the cage of his hyena.

"By what means," she went on, "can he have so tamed these animals as to be secure of their affection?"

"What seems to you a problem," I responded, interrupting her, "is in reality a fact of nature."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, with an incredulous smile.

"You think, then, that animals are devoid of passions?" I asked her. "You must know that we can teach them all the qualities of civilized existence!"

She looked at me with an astonished air.

"But," I went on, "when I first saw Monsieur Martin, I confess that, like yourself, I uttered an exclamation of surprise. I happened to be standing by the side of an old soldier, whose right leg had been amputated, and who had come in with me. I was struck by his appearance. His was one of those intrepid heads, stamped with the seal of war, upon whose brows are written the battles of Napoleon. About this old soldier was a certain air of frankness and of gayety which always gains my favor. He was doubtless one of those old troopers whom nothing can surprise; who find food for laughter in the dying spasms of a comrade, who gayly despoil and bury him, who challenge bullets with indifference—though their arguments are short enough—and who would hob-nob with the devil. After keenly looking at the showman as he was coming from the cage, my neighbor pursed his lips with that significant expression of contempt which superior men assume, to show their difference from the dupes. At my exclamation of surprise at Monsieur Martin's courage he smiled, and nodding with a knowing air, remarked, 'I understand all that.'

"'How?' I answered. 'If you can explain this mystery to me you will oblige me greatly.'

"In a few moments we had struck up an acquaintance, and we went to dine at the first restaurant at hand. At dessert a bottle of champagne completely cleared the memory of this strange old soldier. He told his story, and I saw he was right when he exclaimed, 'I understand all that.'"

When we got home, she teased me so, and yet so prettily, that I consented to write out for her the soldier's reminiscences.

The next day she received this episode, from an epic that might be called "The French in Egypt."

During the expedition undertaken in Upper Egypt by General Desaix, a Provençal soldier, who had fallen into the hands of the Maugrabins, was taken by these Arabs into the desert beyond the cataracts of the Nile. In order to put between them and the French army a distance to assure their safety, the Maugrabins made a forced march, and did not halt till night. They then camped by the side of a well, surrounded by a clump of palm-trees, where they had before buried some provisions. Never dreaming that their prisoner would think of flight, they merely bound his hands, and all of them, after eating a few dates, and giving barley to their horses, went to sleep. When the bold Provençal saw his enemies incapable of watching him, he picked up a cimeter with his teeth, and then with the blade fixed between his knees, cut the cords that lashed his wrists, and found himself at liberty. He at once seized a carbine and a dagger; provided himself with some dry dates and a small bag of barley, powder and balls; girded on the cimeter, sprang on a horse, and pressed forward in the direction where he fancied the French army must be found. Impatient to regain the bivouac, he so urged the weary horse, that the poor beast fell dead, its sides torn with the spurs, leaving the Frenchman alone in the midst of the desert.

After wandering for some time amid the sand with the desperate courage of an escaping convict, the soldier was forced to stop. Night was closing in. Despite the beauty of the Eastern night, he had not strength

sufficient to go on. Fortunately he had reached a height on the top of which were palm-trees, whose leaves, for some time visible far off, had awakened in his heart a hope of safety. He was so weary that he lay down on a granite stone, oddly shaped like a camp bed, and went to sleep, without taking the precaution to protect himself in his slumber. He had sacrificed his life, and his last thought was a regret for having left the Maugrabins, whose wandering life began to please him, now that he was far from them and from all hope of succor.

He was awakened by the sun, whose pitiless rays falling vertically upon the granite made it intolerably hot. For the Provençal had been so careless as to cast himself upon the ground in the direction opposite to that on which the green majestic palm-tops threw their shadow. He looked at these solitary trees and shuddered! They reminded him of the graceful shafts surmounted by long foils that distinguish the Saracenic columns of the Cathedral of Arles. He counted the few palms; and then looked about him. A terrible despair seized upon his soul. He saw a boundless ocean. The melancholy sands spread round him, glittering like a blade of steel in a bright light, as far as eye could see. He knew not whether he was gazing on an ocean, or a chain of lakes as lustrous as a mirror. A fiery mist shimmered, in little ripples, above the tremulous landscape. The sky possessed an Oriental blaze, the brilliancy which brings despair, seeing that it leaves the imagination nothing to desire. Heaven and earth alike were all aflame. The silence was terrible in its wild and awful majesty. Infinity, immensity, oppressed the soul on all sides; not a cloud was in the sky, not a breath was in the air, not a movement on the bosom of the sand, which undulated into tiny waves. Far away, the horizon was marked off by a line of light as bright and narrow as a sabre's edge.

The Provençal clasped his arms about a palm-tree as if it had been the body of a friend; then, sheltered by the straight and meagre shadow, he sat down on the granite weeping, and looking with deep dread upon the lonely scene spread out before his eyes. He cried aloud as if to tempt the solitude. His voice, lost in the hollows of the height, gave forth far off a feeble

sound that woke no echo; the echo was within his heart!

The Provençal was twenty-two years old. He loaded his carbine.

"Time enough for that!" he muttered to himself, placing the weapon of deliverance on the ground.

Looking by turns at the melancholy waste of sand and at the blue expanse of sky, the soldier dreamed of France. With delight he fancied that he smelt the Paris gutters, and recalled the towns through which he had passed, the faces of his comrades, and the slightest incidents of his life. Then his Southern imagination made him fancy in the play of heat quivering above the plain, the pebbles of his own dear Provence. But fearing all the dangers of this cruel mirage, he went down in the direction opposite to that which he had taken when he had climbed the hill the night before. Great was his joy on discovering a kind of grotto, naturally cut out of the enormous fragments of granite that formed the bottom of the hill. The remnants of a mat showed that this retreat had once been inhabited. Then, a few steps further, he saw palm-trees with a load of dates. Again the instinct which attaches man to life awoke within his heart. He now hoped to live until the passing of some Maugrabin; or perhaps he would soon hear the boom of cannon, for at that time Bonaparte was overrunning Egypt. Revived by this reflection, the Frenchman cut down a few bunches of ripe fruit, beneath whose weight the date-trees seemed to bend, and felt sure, on tasting this unhoped-for manna, that the inhabitant of this grotto had cultivated the palm-trees. The fresh and luscious substance of the dates bore witness to his predecessor's care.

The Provençal passed suddenly from dark despair to well-nigh insane delight. He climbed the hill again; and spent the remainder of the day in cutting down a barren palm-tree, which the night before had served him for shelter.

A vague remembrance made him think of the wild desert beasts; and, foreseeing that they might come to seek the spring which bubbled through the sand among the rocks, he resolved to secure himself against their visits by placing a barrier at the door of his hermitage.

In spite of his exertions, in spite of the strength with which the fear of being eaten during sleep endued him, it was impossible for him to cut the palm to pieces in one day; but he contrived to bring it down. When, toward evening, the monarch of the desert fell, the thunder of its crash resounded far, as if the mighty solitude had given forth a moan. The soldier shuddered as if he had heard a voice that prophesied misfortune. But like an heir who does not long bewail the death of a relation, he stripped the tree of the broad, long, green leaves, and used them to repair the mat on which he was about to lie. At length, wearied by the heat and by his labors, he fell asleep beneath the red roof of his murky grotto.

In the middle of the night he was disturbed by a strange noise. He sat up; in the profound silence he could hear a creature breathing—a savage respiration which resembled nothing human. Terror, intensified by darkness, silence, and the fancies of one suddenly awakened, froze his blood. He felt the sharp contraction of his scalp, when, as the pupils of his eyes dilated, he saw in the shadow two faint and yellow lights. At first he thought these lights were some reflection of his eyeballs, but soon, the clear brightness of the night helping him to distinguish objects in the grotto, he saw lying at two paces from him an enormous beast!

Was it a lion?—a tiger?—a crocodile? The Provençal was not sufficiently educated to know the species of his enemy, but his terror was all the greater; since his ignorance assisted his imagination. He bore the cruel torture of listening, of marking the caprices of this awful breathing, without losing a sound of it, or venturing to make the slightest movement. A smell as pungent as a fox's, but more penetrating, filled the grotto; and when it entered his nostrils his terror passed all bounds; he could no longer doubt the presence of the terrible companion whose royal den was serving him for bivouac. Presently the moon, now sinking, lighted up the den, and in the moon-rays gradually shone out a panther's spotted skin.

The lion of Egypt was sleeping, curled up like a great dog who is the peaceable possessor of a sumptuous kennel at a mansion door; its eyes, which had been

opened for one moment, were now closed again. Its face was turned toward the Frenchman.

A thousand troubled thoughts passed through the mind of the panther's prisoner. At first he thought of shooting it; but there was not enough room between them to adjust his gun; the barrel would have reached beyond the animal. And what if he awoke it! This supposition made him motionless. Listening in the silence to the beating of his heart, he cursed the loud pulsations, fearing to disturb the sleep that gave him time to seek some means of safety. Twice he placed his hand upon his cimeter, with the intention of cutting off the head of his enemy; but the difficulty of cutting through the short, strong fur compelled him to abandon the idea. To fail was certain death. He preferred the odds of conflict, and determined to await the daybreak. And daylight was not long in coming. The Frenchman was able to examine the panther. Its muzzle was stained with blood.

"It has eaten plenty," he reflected, without conjecturing that the feast might have been composed of human flesh; "it will not be hungry when it wakes."

It was a female. The fur upon her breast and thighs shone with whiteness. A number of little spots like velvet looked like charming bracelets around her paws. The muscular tail was also white, but tipped with black rings. The upper part of her coat, yellow as old gold, but very soft and smooth, bore those characteristic marks, shaded into the form of roses, which serve to distinguish the panther from the other species of the cat tribe. This fearful visitor was snoring tranquilly in an attitude as graceful as that of a kitten lying on the cushions of an ottoman. Her sinewy, blood-stained paws, with powerful claws, were spread beyond her head, which rested on them, and from which stood out the thin, straight whiskers with a gleam like silver wires.

If she had been imprisoned in a cage, the Provençal would assuredly have admired the creature's grace, and the vivid contrast of color that gave her garment an imperial lustre; but at this moment he felt his sight grow dim at her sinister aspect. The presence of the panther, even sleeping, made him experience the effect

which the magnetic eyes of the serpent are said to exercise upon the nightingale.

In the presence of this danger the courage of the soldier faltered, although without doubt it would have risen at the cannon's mouth. A desperate thought, however, filled his mind, and dried up at its source the chilly moisture which was rolling down his forehead. Acting as men do who, driven to extremities, at last defy their fate, and nerve themselves to meet their doom, he saw a tragedy in this adventure, and resolved to play his part in it with honor to the last.

"Two days ago," he argued with himself, "the Arabs might have killed me."

Considering himself as good as dead, he waited bravely, yet with restless curiosity, for the awaking of his enemy.

When the sun shone out, the panther opened her eyes suddenly; then she spread out her paws forcibly, as if to stretch them and get rid of cramp. Then she yawned, showing an alarming set of teeth and an indented, rasp-like tongue. "She is like a dainty lady!" thought the Frenchman, as he saw her rolling over with a gentle and coquettish movement. She licked off the blood that stained her paws and mouth, and rubbed her head with movements full of charm. "That's it! Just beautify yourself a little!" the Frenchman said, his gayety returning with his courage. "Then we must say good-morning." And he took up the short dagger of which he had relieved the Maugrabins.

At this moment the panther turned her head toward the Frenchman, and looked at him fixedly, without advancing. The rigidity of those metallic eyes, and their insupportable brightness, made the Provençal shudder. The beast began to move toward him. He looked at her caressingly, and fixing her eyes as if to magnetize her, he let her come close up to him; then, with a soft and gentle gesture, he passed his hand along her body, from head to tail, scratching with his nails the flexible vertebræ that divide a panther's yellow back. The beast put up her tail with pleasure; her eyes grew softer; and when for the third time the Frenchman accomplished this self-interested piece of

flattery, she broke into a purring like a cat. But this purr proceeded from a throat so deep and powerful that it re-echoed through the grotto like the peals of a cathedral organ. The Provençal, realizing the success of his caresses, redoubled them, until the imperious beauty was completely soothed and lulled.

When he felt sure that he had perfectly subdued the ferocity of his capricious companion, whose hunger had been satisfied so cruelly the night before, he got up to leave the grotto. The panther let him go; but when he had climbed the hill, she came bounding after him with the lightness of a sparrow hopping from branch to branch, and rubbed herself against the soldier's leg, arching her back after the fashion of a cat. Then looking at her guest with eyes whose brightness had grown less inflexible, she uttered that savage cry which naturalists have compared to the sound of a saw.

"What an exacting beauty!" cried the Frenchman, smiling. He set himself to play with her ears, to caress her body, and to scratch her head hard with his nails. Then, growing bolder with success, he tickled her skull with the point of his dagger, watching for the spot to strike her. But the hardness of the bones made him afraid of failing.

The sultana of the desert approved the action of her slave by raising her head, stretching her neck, and showing her delight by the quietness of her attitude. The Frenchman suddenly reflected that in order to assassinate this fierce princess with one blow he need only stab her in the neck. He had just raised his knife for the attempt, when the panther, with a graceful action, threw herself upon the ground before his feet, casting him from time to time a look in which, in spite of its ferocity of nature, there was a gleam of tenderness.

The poor Provençal, with his back against a palm-tree, ate his dates, while he cast inquiring glances, now toward the desert for deliverers, now upon his terrible companion, to keep an eye upon her dubious clemency. Every time he threw away a date-stone, the panther fixed her eyes upon the spot with inconceivable mistrust. She scrutinized the Frenchman with a business-like attention; but the examination seemed favorable, for when he finished his poor meal, she licked his boots,

and with her rough, strong tongue removed the dust incrusted in their creases.

"But when she becomes hungry?" thought the Provençal.

Despite the shudder this idea caused him, the soldier began examining with curiosity the proportions of the panther, certainly one of the most beautiful specimens of her kind. She was three feet high and four feet long, without the tail. This powerful weapon, as round as a club, was nearly three feet long. The head—large as that of a lioness—was distinguished by an expression of rare delicacy; true, the cold cruelty of the tiger dominated, but there was also a resemblance to the features of a wily woman. In a word, the countenance of the solitary queen wore at this moment an expression of fierce gayety, like that of Nero flushed with wine; she had quenched her thirst in blood, and now desired to play.

The soldier tried to come and go, and the panther let him, content to follow him with her eyes, but less after the manner of a faithful dog than of a great Angora cat, suspicious even of the movements of its master. When he turned round he saw beside the fountain the carcass of his horse; the panther had dragged the body all that distance. About two-thirds had been devoured. This sight reassured the Frenchman. He was thus easily able to explain the absence of the panther, and the respect which she had shown for him while he was sleeping.

This first piece of luck emboldened him about the future. He conceived the mad idea of setting up a pleasant household life, together with the panther, neglecting no means of pacifying her and of conciliating her good graces. He returned to her, and saw, to his delight, that she moved her tail with an almost imperceptible motion. Then he sat down beside her without fear, and began to play with her; he grasped her paws, her muzzle, pulled her ears, threw her over on her back, and vigorously scratched her warm and silky sides. She let him have his way, and when the soldier tried to smooth the fur upon her paws she carefully drew in her claws, which had the curve of a Damascus blade. The Frenchman, who kept one hand upon his

dagger, was still thinking of plunging it into the body of the too-confiding panther; but he feared lest she should strangle him in her last convulsions. And besides, within his heart there was a movement of remorse that warned him to respect an inoffensive creature. It seemed to him that he had found a friend in this vast desert. Involuntarily he called to mind a woman whom he once had loved, whom he sarcastically had nicknamed "Mignonne," from her jealousy, which was so fierce that during the whole time of their acquaintance he went in fear that she would stab him. This memory of his youth suggested the idea of calling the young panther by this name, whose lithe agility and grace he now admired with less terror.

Toward evening he had become so far accustomed to his perilous position, that he almost liked the hazard of it. At last his companion had got into the habit of looking at him when he called in a falsetto voice "Mignonne."

At sundown Mignonne uttered several times a deep and melancholy cry.

"She has been properly brought up," thought the light-hearted soldier; "she says her prayers!" But it was, no doubt, her peaceful attitude which brought the jest into his mind.

"All right, my little pet; I will let you get to sleep first," he said, relying on his legs to get away as soon as she was sleeping, and to seek some other shelter.

The soldier waited with patience for the hour of flight, and when it came, set out full speed in the direction of the Nile. But he had only gone a quarter of a league across the sand when he heard the panther bounding after him, uttering at intervals that saw-like cry, more terrible even than the thudding of her leaps.

"Well!" he said to himself, "she must have taken a fancy to me. Perhaps she has never yet met any one. It is flattering to be her first love!" At this moment the Frenchman fell into a shifting quicksand, so dangerous to the traveller in the desert, escape from which is hopeless. He felt that he was sinking; he gave a cry of terror. The panther seized him by the collar with her teeth, and springing backward with stupendous vigor drew him from the gulf as if by magic.

"Ah! Mignonne!" cried the soldier, enthusiastically caressing her, "we are friends now for life and death. But no tricks, eh?" and he retraced his steps.

Henceforth the desert was as though it had been peopled. It contained a being with whom he could converse, and whose ferocity had been softened for him, without his being able to explain so strange a friendship.

However great was his desire to keep awake and on guard, he fell asleep. On awakening, Mignonne was no longer to be seen. He climbed the hill, and then perceived her afar off, coming along by leaps and bounds according to the nature of these creatures, the extreme flexibility of whose vertebræ prevents their running.

Mignonne came up, her jaws besmeared with blood. She received the caresses of her companion with deep purrs of satisfaction. Her eyes, now full of softness, were turned, with even greater tenderness than the night before, to the Provençal, who spoke to her as to a pet.

"Ah! Beauty! you are a respectable young woman, are you not? You like petting, don't you? Are you not ashamed of yourself? You have been eating a Maugrabin! Well! they're animals, as you are. But don't you go and gobble up a Frenchman. If you do, I shall not love you!"

She played as a young pup plays with its master, letting him roll her over, beat and pet her; and sometimes she would coax him to caress her with a movement of entreaty.

A few days passed thus. This companionship revealed to the Provençal the sublime beauties of the desert. From the moment when he found within it hours of fear and yet of calm, a sufficiency of food, and a living creature who absorbed his thoughts, his soul was stirred by new emotions. It was a life of contrasts. Solitude revealed to him her secrets, and involved him in her charm. He discovered in the rising and the setting of the sun a splendor hidden from the world of men. His frame quivered when he heard above his head the soft whirr of a bird's wing—rare wayfarer; or when he saw the clouds—those changeful, many-colored voyagers—mingle in the depth of heaven. In the dead of night he studied the effects of the moon

upon the sea of sand, which the simoom drove in ever-changing undulations. He lived with the Oriental day; he marvelled at its pomp and glory; and often, after having watched the grandeur of a tempest in the plain, in which the sands were whirled in dry red mists of deadly vapor, he beheld with ecstasy the coming on of night, for then there fell upon him the benignant coolness of the stars. He heard imaginary music in the sky. Solitude taught him all the bliss of reverie. He spent whole hours in calling trifles to remembrance, in comparing his past life with his strange present. To his panther he grew passionately attached, for he required an object of affection. Whether by a strong effort of his will he had really changed the character of his companion, or whether, thanks to the constant warfare of the desert, she found sufficient food, she showed no disposition to attack him, and at last, in her perfect tameness, he no longer felt the slightest fear.

He spent a great part of his time in sleeping, but ever, like a spider in its web, with mind alert, that he might not let deliverance escape him, should any chance to pass within the sphere described by the horizon. He had sacrificed his shirt to make a flag, which he had hoisted to the summit of a palm-tree stripped of leaves. Taught by necessity, he had found the means to keep it spread by stretching it with sticks, lest the wind should fail to wave it at the moment when the hoped-for traveller might be travelling the waste of sand.

It was during the long hours when hope abandoned him that he amused himself with his companion. He had learnt to understand the different inflections of voice, and the expression of her glances; he had studied the varying changes of the spots that starred her robe of gold. Mignonne no longer growled, even when he seized her by the tuft with which her terrible tail ended, to count the black and white rings which adorned it, and which glittered in the sun like precious gems. It delighted him to watch the delicate soft lines of her snowy breast and graceful head. But above all when she was gambolling in her play he watched her with delight, for the agility, the youthfulness of all her movements filled him with an ever-fresh surprise. He ad-

mired her suppleness in leaping, climbing, gliding, pressing close against him, swaying, rolling over, crouching for a bound. But however swift, her spring, however slippery the block of granite, she would stop short, without motion, at the sound of the word "Mignonne!"

One day, in the most dazzling sunshine, an enormous bird was hovering in the air. The Provençal left his panther to examine this new visitor; but after waiting for a moment the deserted sultana uttered a hoarse growl.

"Blessed if I don't believe that she is jealous!" he exclaimed, perceiving that her eyes were once more hard and rigid. "A woman's soul has passed into her body, that is certain!"

The eagle disappeared in air, while he admired afresh the rounded back and graceful outlines of the panther. She was as pretty as a woman. The blonde fur blended in its delicate gradations into the dull white color of the thighs. The brilliant sunshine made this vivid gold, with spots of brown, take on a lustre indescribable. The Provençal and the panther looked at one another understandingly; the beauty of the desert quivered when she felt the nails of her admirer on her skull. Her eyes gave forth a flash like lightning, and then she closed them hard.

"She *has* a soul," he cried, as he beheld the desert queen in her repose, golden as the sands, white as their blinding lustre, and, like them, fiery and alone.

"Well," she said to me, "I have read your pleading on behalf of animals. But what was the end?"

"Ah! They ended as all great passions end—through a misunderstanding. Each thinks the other guilty of a falsity, each is too proud for explanation, and obstinacy brings about a rupture."

"And sometimes in the happiest moments," she said, "a look, an exclamation, is enough! Well, what was the end of the story?"

"That is difficult to tell, but you will understand what the old fellow had confided to me, when, finishing his bottle of champagne, he exclaimed, 'I don't know how I hurt her, but she turned on me like mad, and with her sharp teeth seized my thigh. The action was

not savage; but fancying that she meant to kill me I plunged my dagger into her neck. She rolled over with a cry that froze my blood; she looked at me in her last struggles without anger. I would have given everything on earth, even my cross, which then I had not won, to bring her back to life. And the soldiers who were hastening to my succor, found me bathed in tears.

"'Well, sir,' he went on, after a moment's silence, 'since then I have been through the wars in Germany, Spain, Russia, France; I have dragged my carcass round the world; but there is nothing like the desert in my eyes! Ah! it is beautiful—superb.'

"'What did you feel there?' I inquired of him.

"'Oh! that I cannot tell you. Besides, I do not always regret my panther and my clump of palm-trees. I must be sad at heart for that. But mark my words. In the desert, there is everything and there is nothing.'

"'Explain yourself.'

"'Well!' he continued, with a gesture of impatience, 'it is God without man.'"

A tale of the early days in California. Its revelations are not exactly lovely, but they are probably truthful. It was written by Adair Welcker.

"WRECK REYNOLDS."

THE town of Red Rag is situated on Brown's Gulch, and "Doc's Resort," which is the most important of the fourteen whitewashed buildings which constitute the town, is over Bitter Creek. "Doc's Resort" is a saloon; and like the thirteen remaining houses of Red Rag, it is composed of rough redwood boards—boards made first white by whitewash, and some of them brown, afterward, by dust. It rests over Bitter Creek on upright posts; and these posts are about as upright as are the citizens of Red Rag; that is to say, about as upright as the legs of a cow when drawn on a slate by a four-year-old artist. Being the most important as well as the largest building in town, in addition to having green shutters for the windows, as have one or two other buildings, "Doc's" is made conspicuous by a sign painted by a genuine sign painter, who was sober, besides, when he painted it; while the letters on the sign of "Joe's Retreat," down by the post-office, were—as is evident by their staggering and intoxicated appearance—either painted by an amateur, or else by a sign painter under the influence of "Joe's" stimulants. Over "Doc's Resort" spread most of the green branches of an oak tree whose trunk is in the bank, and some of whose roots extend out into the creek below, and are decorated with empty bottles which have been thrown out of the side window of "Doc's." As to the number of discarded cards, similarly caught, it is useless to say anything; for a large population of cynical Jacks and overdressed kings and queens inhabit the neighborhood.

Having an oak tree over it, a stream beneath it, a porch in front of it, and above the porch a shade roof reaching out sixteen feet, "Doc's Resort" is the favorite of the town; and on hot days Red Rag's inhabitants congregate there, and, seated in the oak arm-chairs in

front of the resort, whittle sticks, discuss politics, and laugh at jokes as they send tobacco-juice with unfailing accuracy of aim through the knot-holes in the floor to the stream below. While doing so they enjoy a self-approving contentment of mind not often found elsewhere. Of course the bare-footed small boys of Red Rag are ever present to absorb wisdom from the tales told by their elders, and to wonder at their markmanship. There is a watering-trough, with a green wooden pump at the end, in front of the establishment generally briefly spoken of as "Doc's;" but there is no cup for the benefit of travellers, as when the pump is in operation it has never yet been known to give forth those liquids with which, it is supposed at "Doc's," that passing travellers can only be satisfied.

Down the road in front of a building in which sheets of tin, cut from coal-oil cans, make satisfactory window-panes, in red letters on a board painted black is the name "Low Song." Low Song, who in loose white raiment accompanies the silent mysterious movements of his flat-iron with what may or may not be called a low song, has evidently executed this sign with his own artistic fingers, for the letters look as if they had been placed on the sign-board with a flat-iron dipped in a pot of red paint; and there is a certain wild scorn of the American method shown in the formation of the letters, which indicates that there is foreign blood in the veins of the artist. Back of the wash-house is the creek of which we have spoken, where, after dark, Low Song destroys the clothes of those of his customers who are too slow in making payments to suit his ideas, by washing them with cobble-stones and soda. This he does by placing the garment on one rock while he beats it with another, keeping time as he does so to a low barbaric chant, which carries him in imagination back to the Flowery Kingdom.

Here and there about the town are the unmarked graves of men who, in it or in its neighborhood, have started on that journey which leads to another world, "with their boots on;" thus breaking in upon the well-known method of making it without them. The town was once a mining town; and afterward, because of the mineral springs around it, a place to which invalids

who had sufficient defiant courage sometimes resorted. Deserted cabins and abandoned tunnels in the hills, the mouths of some of which were overgrown with wild grape-vines, and filled with dirt and cobwebs, tell of the mines; and additional graves—graves of people who followed the customary method and died with their boots off—tell of the invalids. There are grim, rocky hills around Red Rag in which the great rocks make us think, at times, of the Rock of Ages, as we have seen it surrounded by rolling black clouds in engravings. Altogether, Red Rag is a melancholy place. The graveyards, the deserted cabins, the sighing pine trees, and the atmosphere of men and of times gone by impress this upon you.

It was a hot summer day when some of the citizens of the town and a few strangers sat on the porch in front of "Doc's." Nobody knew who "Doc" was. Nobody cared. They knew only that he was a fierce-looking little German with red cheeks and a head bald in the centre, having two upright hedge fences of hair on either side of the bald spot; but the fence had long been down both behind and in front. They knew that there was a look in his gray-blue eyes which said that they must not undertake to trifle with him; and they knew that he had a dog named "Fritz," possessing the accomplishment of walking on his hind legs, and who, perhaps, for this reason, was not to be trifled with. That was all they knew of "Doc." He might have been an escaped convict; but as the inhabitants of Red Rag had never been known to be proud, they were perfectly willing, even if that were so, for him to move unchallenged in their best society. Besides, they might themselves be convicts in prospective, so what was the difference? "Doc" himself, on the day referred to, sat in front of his resort trying to keep cool, and vainly hoping that a breeze would spring up and pass down between the two fences of hair on his head. Beside him sat a Mexican who, if rumor could be believed, could roll a brown-paper cigarette, say his prayers, make love, or cut a throat with equal skill and grace.

On a bench by the wall, with his brown face bent down, apparently oblivious to the conversation of the leading men of the town, was a second "Doc." The

interior of this man's body had been saturated with alternate doses of the drug coca, brandy, and morphine. The coca and brandy went down his throat; the morphine had been sent through every part of his body to which he could reach with his bent arm. The result was that he alternated between a comatose state and another state in which he saw more things than are dreamed of in that philosophy to which Horatio was referred. In consequence of this, if he went to the back of the saloon and returned with blood streaming down his wrist no one took notice of it. A graduate with highest honors from one of the leading medical colleges of the world; the respected correspondent of leading medical magazines; witty and sought for in New York's best society, yet, in order to appear more brilliant still when in that society, he commenced a career which was to end in a rough board cabin of one room, beneath the pine trees in a lonely canyon, where he cooked his own meals; used his fingers and his surgical instruments for knives and forks; ate from a tin plate and drank from a tin cup; practised for patients who didn't pay, and fought and struggled with imaginary terrors within the darkness around him, with the shadow of death hovering over him, alone but for the howl of the coyote, through the long and almost endless nights. The inhabitants of Red Rag often visited his cabin in a body and searched for and bore away the morphine which they found. But the inhabitants did not search under the roots of the trees, in his sewed-up mattress, or at the bottom of the barrel which he had cunningly filled with waste paper, broken bottles, and rags; so their treatment did not produce a cure. When they begged him on these occasions to tell them on his word of honor as a man and a gentleman whether he had any of the drug concealed, on his word of honor, as a man and a gentleman, he would tell them a lie.

The inhabitants of Red Rag loved him for his perpetual benevolence, and they tried to save him, but in vain. To their minds, even when steeped almost into insensibility by the drug, he was a greater physician than any other in the land; and to use their unanimous expression, they "swore by him." It is equally true

that when, after making a feeble attempt to gradually abandon the opium, he would return to it, they were as unanimous in swearing at him.

There were other gentlemen in blue or brown overalls and dusty boots at "Doc's" on the occasion to which we refer, as well as a few clean-shaved individuals in white shirts from the "city." At this season of the year Red Rag was made populous by hundreds of city people who came to the mountains to camp and hunt, and by dozens of gamblers who invariably came in pursuit of the city man. These gamblers, who dressed in the flashiest style when in the city themselves, usually came wandering up the dusty roads dressed as tramps or country youths, bearing on their faces an artificial look of innocence worthy of a cherub, or of the famous Simple Simon himself. After remaining around "Doc's" four or five days, watching the various games which ran there at various green-topped tables day and night, they would be overcome by a curiosity which was beyond control, take a hand, and lose; and continue to lose until somebody in a white shirt would want, like the rest, to take advantage of the countryman's innocence of the game.

It was twelve o'clock. In a city the bells would have rung and the whistles would have blown. In Red Rag they took the arrival of noon just as they took the hours which went before it. They allowed it to come and pass without notice. A number of dusty wagons loaded with lumber had passed through the town accompanied by a cloud of dust which, because of the softness of the morning breeze, kept even pace with the wagons. At the hour spoken of, one of these wagons stopped and the horses were watered at the trough in front of "Doc's." A stout man about sixty-five years of age, bald, with a beard of three days' growth, who had been lying on his back on the lumber, got down and went into the saloon. After refreshing himself he came out and took a chair on the porch. He had large lead-colored expressionless eyes and a round and rather red face. On his forehead was an indentation where a bullet had once struck. His mouth was large and his lips were thick. His frame was broad and had been one of great power. He wore

a blue coat and vest from which most of the buttons were gone. His pantaloons were slick, well-worn brown overalls, and on his feet were worn-out shoes, one of which was tied with white wrapping twine and the other was open. As he wore no suspenders the buttons of his vest did not come down to the top of his pantaloons, and a portion of his blue flannel shirt was visible.

Seeing the brown-faced doctor on the bench with his head down and his eyes closed, he said, speaking to the company generally, "I see that he has not chosen his harp yet!" They shook their heads. "Well," said the speaker, "he looks as if he will have a chance soon. So may you. So may I. Where's the odds?" The company, thinking doubtless that there were no odds, saw no occasion to reply. "If it's hell there," said the speaker, pointing with his finger to the clear blue sky overhead, "it's but a change from hell here; so you quit even, and if you get heaven when you die, you've taken the pot, so where's the odds again?" It was evident that the company had again discovered no odds, so made mention of none.

As soon as it was known that this speaker had arrived in town, the crowd in front of "Doc's" rapidly increased, and they sat in silence and listened while he talked. One of two gentlemen in white shirts, who sat apart from the rest, noticing this asked the other who the new arrival was, in a whisper. Hearing the question he replied himself and said: "Don't know me? Never saw me? Your ignorance is your capital in life and will make your fortune. I'm from San Diego to Siskiyou, and from the Sierras to the sea, known as the man who's been in more jails and made and lost more fortunes than any man alive. Christened twice —once by my mother, and the name she gave me, being too good for use, I'll keep it for Sundays when I commence going to church again. Christened the other time one day when in a religious frame of mind, 'Wreck Reynolds.' That's my every-day name. It's good enough for other hogs and it's good enough for you."

Upon learning the name and that it was good enough for him, the young man in the white shirt looked at first surprised and then said: "I asked neither for your name nor your impertinence."

A smile of anticipation was on the faces of the chief inhabitants of Red Rag when "Wreck" Reynolds in reply said: "Go 'way, you gnat. You are not entitled to speak to me. I've risen above your style of trash by having rolled in more gutters than you have had days in your brief life. I'm surprised at your audacity when rising on your young mental toes you speak to a man with such a record. I'd bet my life against the life of even a mere Congressman that you've never been in jail yet."

"No, sir, I have not," said the youth in the white shirt.

"I thought not," said the first speaker, with a look of withering scorn. "Why, the moment I saw your emaciated bread-basket, your sparrow's lungs and your mosquito's head, I knew you wouldn't steal except with your Sunday clothes on, and nowhere except in church. You follow the rubric and Ten Commandments when you steal, you do!"

There was a roar of laughter from the crowd. The young man flushed with anger and started up with a threatening look to move toward Reynolds. A friend caught him by the arm and pulled him back.

"Bah!" said Reynolds, noticing the action, "I wouldn't hurt you unless I had to. You're a fool to be offended by what I am—by one of the Grand Army of the Pariahs. Take my apology. Coming from me it is worthless; and therefore, like the rest of the world, I offer it freely. You're a stranger. It is well for you, since you wish for an apology, that you are not one of these other vermin. If you were, you wouldn't get it."

The other "vermin," as he called them, were greatly amused. The young man in the white shirt was somewhat pacified. If he had been able to see the number of scars where wounds had been made by knife-blades on the body of the man who said that he had been baptized "Wreck Reynolds," he would have been more than satisfied.

All that day Mr. Reynolds sat on the porch perfectly sober; but he said that he was sobering up. He was, however, engaged in study. All that afternoon, as he studied, poured from his lips expressions filled with wit

and humor. Whenever any one crossed swords with him in word combat, the person who did so was worsted. All that afternoon the male populace of Red Rag sat. listened, and laughed. That wit in the mouth of a United States Senator would have given him a place in American history; in the mouth of an American author of established reputation it would have become American literature; in the mouth of "Wreck Reynolds" it was lost. Rarely finding any one willing to be made ridiculous, most of his wit was turned against himself. Those unfamiliar with his history soon learned that nearly all that he said of himself was true; and that while nothing of his early life was definitely known, there was a rumor which said that he had come to the California mines with the first and had made a fortune; that he had taken this fortune home and had married the girl to whom he had been engaged almost since boyhood. A child was born, and when it was eight months old his wife left him and her child and fled with another man to Europe. Leaving the child with friends, he followed them. It was believed that he had overtaken them in Egypt; that the man had bitten the Egyptian dust, but the erring wife had been allowed to go free. When he returned to his desolate home he came to it to find in the parlor a small white coffin, and in that coffin rested the last tie which had bound him to his home. He became a drunkard first, and later, found additional excitement at the gaming-table. It resulted in his becoming known from one end of the land to the other as a man who had no equal at cards. Some thought, however, that he had one failing. While he was willing to lose if he could not play against those who were playing an unfair game and detect their dishonesty, and understanding it, beat them, he would not play himself any but a "square game."

Evening came, and over the brown hills rose the moon, followed later by her train of stars. The little doctor had, half an hour before, reeled off to his distant cabin. "Wreck Reynolds" had thought that there was something unusual in his face, so, later, he followed after him. When close at hand he saw coming through the cracks of the cabin the light of the candle within. He knocked on the door. Hearing the knock

the physician inside gave a shriek of terror. Reynolds pushed the door open and saw "Doc," as he called him, standing by a table made out of boards from a pine box on which he had apothecary's scales and a large number of medicine bottles. Reynolds looked at him and saw that his sallow countenance had a haggard look unusual in its intensity, and his eyes were metallic in expression. In the pan on one side of the scales was a white powder, and in the brass pan on the other side the weights, which the doctor, who had a large pair of shears in his hand, had been cutting into pieces. Although the physician was partly incoherent, he learned from him at last that he was attempting to discover a new method of weighing the morphine so that he could make forty grains dissolve in a smaller quantity of water than up to that time had been known to the profession to be possible. He said that he must get the immediate effect of such a dose or die.

Reynolds forced him to undress and get into the rough wooden bunk against the side of the house. The physician would not lie down, but sat up in the bed gritting his teeth, seizing and releasing the bedclothes with his hands and staring at the opposite wall. Then he threatened and cursed some visionary figure seen only to himself in front of him, and afterward drew back from it with dread. A few moments later, after rocking himself backward and forward for some time, he sat still and listened. Then clutching his companion by the arm, while a look of terror was on his face, he said: "Hush! Do you hear them?" Then came raving and more visions, and his queer distorted shadow which the candle threw on the wall varied as he shook his fist, shrank in terror, or hid his face in the worn-out quilt which was wrapped around his knees.

These two men had been friends in the good days of long ago, before the flood of misfortune and misery had separated the past from the present. So Reynolds held the moist hand very tenderly—its owner begging him with a piteous look of dread not to release it.

There came a time when he grew more quiet and rational, and complaining of a dreadful nausea, he besought his companion for opium. Reynolds thought

from his appearance that he had had an overdose already and refused it. In the mean time he had given him occasionally very large doses of brandy, but it had done no good and had had no apparent effect of any kind. The doctor told him that he had not had any morphine for twelve hours, and then commenced continuous coaxing, arguing, whining, crying, begging. His stern companion still refused. "I will die! I will die!" cried the physician. "Well, then, die," said Reynolds, sternly. "It is the best thing for you to do."

It was getting toward midnight when Reynolds saw his patient stealthily drawing something from under his mattress. Suspecting what it was, Reynolds sprang upon him and drew a long keen knife from his grasp. The physician then got up from the bed, fell upon his knees before him, and commenced whining and begging again for opium. Reynolds refused and ordered him back to his bed. As he did so, he noticed something like a faint smile of satisfaction on the face of the other and remembered it afterward. The physician after getting into the bed rolled over on his face and was quiet for some moments. Then he sat up in bed. A new and entirely different expression was on his face —one of perfect rest.

"You rascal!" said Reynolds, alarmed, "you have gotten hold of that drug. How in h—ll did you get it?"

The other was apparently oblivious to what he said, for he made no reply. Looking behind him Reynolds saw, back of his chair, a box containing medicines which he had not previously noticed. Could the physician while on his knees before him have reached it without his knowledge? On examining the box he found in it only drugs with strange names. Upon looking on the bed he found an empty bottle which had previously held a brown liquid. The mystery of the physician's silence was explained.

Without, the wind was rising and was moaning through the pines. The sound attracted the attention of the physician. "Yes, I will pray," he said. He listened again. He nodded his head and smiled, after which he commenced singing a hymn which his companion had not heard since his own boyhood. It was

about the land of rest, where there is no more pain—only rest. He barely started it when he changed it to something else; something which, ceasing to be distinct, could not be understood. After that he seemed to think that he was on an endless sea, on a journey which was never to cease. Then he thought that his mother was beside him, and after speaking her name he said, "Yes; once again," and got slowly out of the bed and knelt by its side. He remained there a long time. He was back in his boyhood, and the hard intervening years had been swept like a mist from his mind. It was apparent at last that he thought that he was at his mother's knees, for he commenced the prayer of his infancy: "Now I lay me down to sleep." He got that far, but he went no further. His companion, into whose eyes the tears had come, did not disturb him for some time. Then, believing that he was asleep, he lifted him up and laid him gently on the bed.

After that he watched by his bed-side. While watching him he fell asleep himself. When he waked the sun's light was beginning to come through the cracks in the wall, and it fell on the floor, and the birds in the trees were beginning to sing. He was startled that he should have fallen asleep, and turned to his companion. He was still more startled, for he saw that his journey was over. What had seemed an endless ocean to his delirium had been crossed, and his journey was at an end.

"In luck," said Reynolds, "and that prayer fetched it."

* * * * * *

"Wreck Reynolds" was getting old, so he thought, and he had been much impressed by the death of the man who had connected him with the past. He determined to gamble no more; to change his life and die a respectable death; but, gambler-like, he would play his last game. That morning he was at the end of a table and playing against three men, two of whom were in league against him—the Napoleon of the art. "Poker Reynolds," as others had often called him, was playing, and a crowd gathered round the table in the "resort." Reynolds wore a gray felt hat whose brim concealed his face. "Go way with that whispering-

gallery face of yours," said Reynolds to a youth behind the opposite player. "I want no unfair advantage even of these devils." But if he did not, the others did want an unfair advantage and they took it and he knew it. All day he studied, but for the first time in his life he failed to fathom it. He knew that there was a combination, but that was not all. There was something in the game which was new to him; and study as he would it was beyond him. People outside whispered that he was no longer what he used to be.

In the mean time the game went on mechanically. Nothing was said by the players; and but a word now and then, which did not refer to the game, by the watchful and eager audience. The only sounds were the "zip" of the cards when being shuffled; the occasional "clink" of a pile of coin as one of the players in pretended study passed it through his fingers; the slight noise of the cards falling rapidly, like falling leaves, when being dealt; the noise made by a tired watcher who shifted the weight of his body from one leg to the other, and the noise made when at the end of the game the pack of cards having been once used was thrown on the floor. Mechanical as the others might be, Reynolds was an automaton. The others smoked up boxes of cigars. He smoked nothing. With his head down, the broad brim of his hat always at the same angle to conceal any possible expression, if one should accidentally come to the expressionless face, he did nothing but play and study.

Occasionally, when one of the two combined against him, in order to conceal their real secret, would use some other and well-known method of unfair play, noticing it at once he simply said, in a low tone, "It won't do. Drop it!" and continued with his study. The long day passed, and as it passed, so continued to pass away the money which Reynolds possessed. The stakes were heavy, but game after game was played, till the games which had been played were as many as the minute places on the clock, doubled; but still he lost. He had made up his mind last night—it seemed now (for night was coming again) that it was last week —that this should be his last game. What he was losing now was the money on which he had hoped to live

during what he believed would be the few remaining months of his life; for he was suffering from what the doctors told him was an incurable organic trouble. But as he played, his face still showed no more expression than the face of the clock. Still the occasional clink of the money was heard and the clock ticked monotonously whenever any one stopped to notice it. Several other games had been running at the green-cloth-covered tables in different parts of the room, but the players had stopped to watch the game at which Reynolds played. One of a group of three by the bar said: "Wreck is getting old. He's losing his grip." When men lose at cards, or through gambling in business, they are losing their grip. It is true that he was old; older in the sense of being worn out than they or he knew.

Black clouds were beginning to pass over the great rocks on the rugged mountain tops. The same kind of a wind which he had listened to last night was rising, but he did not hear it. Midnight came; midnight passed. Those who watched the game were reduced to seven or eight. The oil in the dim lamps, which had long ago been lighted, was low, and the flames trembled as "Doc's Resort" now trembled in the heavy threatening winds which came moaning down the gulch. Still the game went on and still Reynolds lost. Behind the emotionless face, back of the concealing hat, the soul of Wreck Reynolds was busy with many things. As he played at a game which, for the first time in his life, he had failed to comprehend, his mind began to wander away from "Doc's Resort." He, too, like the man with whom he had watched last night, in the lone cabin on the mountain side, found his mind wandering back over a long, dreary desert of time to the days of his childhood. He made mistakes now, and the other players looked at each other with surprise as they noticed it. The clock which had seen him in "Doc's" on many occasions for years past, as if receiving a shock at his failures, from which it could not rally, stopped short. The winds without fairly shrieked as if they, too, felt a strange sense of alarm.

Still the game went on. It was noticed that the rim of Reynolds's hat bent gradually lower and

lower. Was it from chagrin or grief? Lower still it went. The others suddenly sprang from their chairs. His face and arms were on the table and his cards, with their faces up, spread out on the table before him. He had played his last game, and had he won? Who dares to say?

The next day the inhabitants of Red Rag followed two pine coffins up a dusty road toward the rocks like the rock of ages. In a lonely valley which these rocks surrounded, and in an open space guarded by four pine trees, two graves were dug; and the two men, each of whom had been the only one in Red Rag familiar with the past history of the other, were placed side by side, to sleep until the towering rocks around them should be rolled aside.

The other "Doc," who ran "Doc's Resort," was called on to "say something." The other inhabitants of Red Rag, standing with their hats off, with one of the large pine trees behind them as a background, listened with bent heads.

"Well," said "Doc," "I have but this to say, and it isn't much coming from me: One was a 'friend' and the other an outcast. What made them so? Fate. What is fate? The surroundings of the lives they lived. Suppose the little friend had never took opium, where would he be? In the drawing-room of a rich mansion, in society, happy. Suppose Wreck had stayed happily married, where would he be? In the presidential chair at the White House. Who would be at their funeral to-day instead of you? Nothing but nobs. Who'd preach the sermon? A bishop. But where's the odds? Even if it was so, they couldn't be any deader than they are now. But the point that gets me is this. Look at the brief moment of their lives and look at these Rockies around us; and after trying to say how long they have been there, and remembering the dread Being that made them, tell me if you will judge, or leave judgment to Him. There will, perhaps, be things of which men do not dream, when He considers all of the acts of their lives, or says, by His judgment, in what they result. Do these rocks look different on rich or on poor? And will the one that made them? Will He look with the changes of passion upon us?

Let us leave them asleep to awaken to His mercy. And now before we depart we will sing 'Rock of Ages.'"

As nearly all knew it—what outcast, even, does not?—there rose up through the sweet mountain air to the deep blue heaven that hymn which has become the common property of sinner and saint. When it ended and only the sigh of the breeze was heard through the pines again, a few wild mountain flowers which had been brought for the purpose were placed on the graves. And then the little band, whose uncertain lives made them humble before their God, wandered away, mournful and with bent heads.

The fond parents of many a young hopeful will appreciate this account of a yielding father and his persistent son, which comes to the Club from the Detroit *Free Press*.

DOES A TWO-YEAR-OLD BABY PAY?

Does a two-year-old baby pay for itself up to the time it reaches that interesting age? Sometimes I think not. I thought so yesterday when my own baby slipped into my study and "scrubbed" the carpet and his best white dress with my bottle of ink. He was playing in the coal-hod ten minutes after a clean dress was put on him, and later in the day he pasted fifty cents' worth of postage-stamps on the parlor wall and poured a dollar's worth of the choicest "White Rose" perfumery out of the window, "*To see it wain.*"

Then he dug out the centre of a nicely-baked loaf of cake, and was found in the middle of the dining-room table with the sugar-bowl between his legs and most of the contents in his stomach.

He has already cost over $100 in doctor bills, and I feel that I am right in attributing my few gray hairs to the misery I endured walking the floor with him at night during the first year of his life.

What has he ever done to pay me for that?

Ah! I hear his little feet pattering along out in the hall. I hear his little ripple of laughter, because he has escaped from his mother and has found his way up to my study at a forbidden hour. But the door is closed. The worthless little vagabond can't get in, and I won't open it for him. No, I won't. I can't be disturbed when I'm writing. He can just cry if he wants to. I won't be bothered for—"*rat, tat, tat*" go his dimpled knuckles on the door. I sit in silence.

"*Rat, tat, tat.*"

I sit perfectly still.

"Papa."

No reply.

"Peeze, papa."

Grim silence.

"Baby tum in—peeze, papa."

He shall not come in.

"My papa."

I write on.

"Papa," says the little voice, "I lub my papa—peeze let baby in."

I am not quite a brute, and I throw open the door. In he comes with outstretched little arms, with shining eyes, with laughing face. I catch him up into my arms, and his warm, soft little arms go around my neck, the not very clean little cheek is laid close to mine, the baby voice says sweetly—

"I lub my papa."

Does he pay?

Well, I guess he does!

It has been said that the most unreasoning of all sensations is that of fright. This story, by Guy de Maupassant, bears out this theory, for there was absolutely nothing to frighten the man. The translation is the Boston *Transcript's*.

A MOMENT OF TERROR.

We had all come up on deck after dinner. Before us lay the Mediterranean without a wrinkle on all its surface, across which a big calm moon threw rays that gave it the look of watered silk. The great boat glided along, throwing out against the sky, which seemed sown with stars, a long serpent of black smoke; while behind us the water, all white, stirred by the rapid movement of the heavy ship and beaten into foam by the screw of the propeller, seemed to writhe and set in motion so many lights that one would have said they came from a boiling moon. We were there, six or eight of us, silent, admiring, looking toward the distant Africa whither we were bound. The captain, who was smoking his cigar in our company, took up the topic of conversation at the dinner-table.

"Yes," said he, "I was frightened that time. My ship lay for six hours with the rock through her hull, tossed about by the sea. Fortunately, we were picked up by an English coaler that had caught sight of us."

But a large man, with a bronzed face of grave aspect, one of those men that you are sure have been through unknown lands, and whose tranquil eyes seem to preserve in their depths something of the strange countries they have seen—a man that you feel is tempered, as it were, with courage, spoke up for the first time:

"You say, captain, that you were frightened. I do not believe it. You deceive yourself in the word and in the sensation that you experienced. A man of energy is never frightened in face of pressing danger. He is moved, agitated, anxious, but fright is another matter."

Then the man with a bronze tint went on in a deliberate manner to explain and to tell us an incident from his own experience.

* * * * * *

It was last winter, in a forest in the north-east of

France. Night had come on two hours too soon, the sky had been so thick. I had for guide a peasant who walked at my side along a very narrow path, under a roof of pine trees, from which the uncurbed wind drew piercing shrieks. Through the tree-tops I could see clouds put to rout, as if they were flying before some terror. At times all the forest bowed under tremendous blasts of wind with a groan of pain; and the cold seized me despite my rapid walk and my heavy clothing. We were to get our supper and stay over-night at the house of a keeper of the forest, not far off. I had come to the place to hunt. Once in a while my guide raised his eyes and murmured, "dreadful weather!" Then he spoke to me of the people to whose house we were going. The father had killed a poacher about two years before, and ever since he had been very sober, as though haunted by a memory. His two sons, both married, lived with him.

The shadows were overwhelming. I saw nothing before me or around me, and the branches of the trees, all tangled together, filled the night with an incessant clamor. At last I caught sight of a light, and soon my companion knocked against a gate. Some sharp cries of women answered us. Then a man's voice, a choking sort of voice, called, "Who goes there?" My guide gave his name. We entered. Within was a picture not easily forgotten.

A bright-eyed, white-haired old man, holding a loaded gun, awaited us. He stood erect in the middle of the kitchen, while two tall fellows, armed with hatchets, guarded the door. I distinguished in dark corners two women on their knees with face turned to the wall. They explained themselves. The old man put back his gun against the wall and ordered them to make ready a bedroom for me; then, as the women did not move, he said to me abruptly:

"You see, sir, I killed a man two years ago this very night. Last year he came back to summon me, and I expect him again to-night."

Then he added, in a tone which made me smile:

"So we are not at all at our ease."

I reassured him to the best of my ability, glad enough to be here on this very night and to see an exhibition

of this superstitious terror. I told them stories and succeeded in calming nearly everybody. Near the fire-place an old dog, almost blind, with a hairy face, one of those animals which resemble men whom you know, was sleeping with his nose between his paws. Outside, the furious tempest beat against the little house, and through a narrow pane, a sort of peep-hole set near the door, I caught a sudden glance in vivid lightning flashes of a confused mass of trees, tossed about by the wind. In spite of all my efforts, I saw plainly that a profound terror held possession of these people, and whenever I stopped talking, every ear was listening intently.

Tired of witnessing this idiotic fright, I was about to ask to be shown to my bedroom, when the old guard suddenly made a bound from his chair, seized his gun again, and stammered in a wild voice: "There he is! There he is! I hear him!"

The two women went down on their knees again, hiding their faces, and the sons took up their hatchets. I was about to resume my attempts to quiet them, when the sleeping dog awoke with a start, and, raising his head, stretching out his neck, and looking toward the fire with his nearly dimmed eyes, he burst into one of those mournful howls which send shivers over those who hear them at night in the country. All eyes were turned on him. He was now motionless, erect on his feet, as though haunted by a vision, and he began to howl toward something invisible, unknown, frightful without doubt, because all his hair stood on end. The guard, deathly pale, cried out: "He knows him! he knows him! he was there when I killed him!" And the women, beside themselves, both began to howl with the dog. Despite myself, great chills ran down my back. The sight of the animal in this place, at this hour, amid these distracted people, was terrible. Then, for one hour, the dog howled without stirring; he howled as though he were in the anguish of a dream; and fear, overwhelming fear, took possession of me. Fear of what? I do not know. It was fear; that was all.

* * * * * *

We remained motionless, pale, expecting some fright-

ful event, with ears alert, with throbbing hearts, startled at the slightest sound. And the dog set out to go around the room, sniffing at the walls, trembling all the time. This beast was making us all crazy! Then the peasant who had brought me to the place threw himself on the dog, in a sort of paroxysm of furious terror, and opening the door leading to a little yard, flung him out. He was quiet at once, and we remained in a silence still more terrifying. And suddenly, all of us at once, we had a start. A being glided against the wall on the outside where the forest was; then it passed against the door, which it appeared to try with a hesitating hand; then nothing more was heard for two minutes, which drove us wild; then it came back, always rubbing against the wall; and it scratched lightly as a child might scratch with its nails; then suddenly a head appeared against the peep-hole, a white head with gleaming eyes like those of a deer; and a sound came out of its throat, an indistinct sound, a plaintive murmur. Then a formidable noise resounded in the kitchen. The old guard had fired; and the sons rushed forward at once, closing the peep-hole by setting up against it the large table, which they steadied with the sideboard. And I swear to you that at the noise made by the gun, which I was not expecting, I had such anguish in my heart, my soul, and my body that I felt myself fainting, ready to die of fright.

We remained there until daybreak, unable to move, to speak a word, cowering in an unspeakable terror. They did not dare to take down the barricade of the door until they saw a slender ray of light making its way through a crack over the door.

At the base of the wall, against the door, the old dog was lying, his jaw broken by a bullet. He had come out from the yard by burrowing a hole under a fence.

* * * * * *

The man with the brown face was quiet. Then he added:

"That night, however, I really ran no danger. But I would much prefer to live over all the hours in which I have suffered the most terrible perils, than that single minute when the gun was fired at the bearded head in the peep-hole."

The romance of a ruined life. By Edward W. Townsend in the San Francisco *Argonaut*.

A LOST CHORD.

"OTTO!"

"See here, Tommy, you've called Otto often enough. Let's go home."

Tommy Paget stared at the Anarchist; he was usually the last to leave the supper-table. It was there he had his cherished opportunities to expound all the "isms" his editor disapproved; and so long as Lynn, Dunnigan, Paget, or any of the late men he chummed with, would stay at the supper-table, Patsy, the Anarchist, never suggested leaving.

"Well, Tommy, since you won't go, I'll tell you a story.

"As you know, I was up North last week gathering pearls of scandal to embroider on that sensation Dunni has woven out of the Mason case.

"To catch a night-train down, I was driven over from Oroville to the town of Gridley, and upon inquiring how late the train would be, found I should have the social delights of the town at my disposal until two o'clock in the morning. I had a book and found a beer-hall, so was doing very well until I was distracted by the demands of an insufficiently-drunken tramp to supply him with 'the forbidden Cup,' for which he offered to exchange a song.

"It is my belief that the Cup is a beneficent agency in promoting the survival of the fittest, so the bargain was made. He took whiskey—Gridley whiskey!—and as much as the barkeeper would permit. Then he wobbled over to a piano, which had a tone like a keg of nails, and proceeded to make noises that gradually assumed a resemblance to 'The Lost Chord.' As he reached the bravura, 'It may be that only in heaven,' I suddenly became very much interested. He had swung into the big accompaniment as no one could who had not once played it perfectly, his voice cleared on the last notes, and he took them with evidence of careful training.

"I was suddenly conscious that I was listening to a man whose name, seven or eight years ago, was constantly in every society column in the city. He had been a society feature. His people were good; his musical education brilliant; handsome, well dressed, and—clerk in a mining office at sixty dollars a month.

"You remember the case, Dunni—only a few thousand short—friends squared it—disappeared—forgotten.

"There were tears in his poor, shallow eyes when I thanked him and asked him to sit at my table. He had a mustache and beard like a ragged chrysanthemum, and very little resemblance to a human being, yet it pleased me to act as if he were what I had known him to be. After he had accepted several payments for the song and had a brave and merry heart, I let him know that I knew him—he had never known me.

"He told me graciously that he had just opened up a tremendously rich quartz-mine, and was then on his way to the city to order a mill, but would be delayed a day or so, as he had lost his trunk from the stage coming down from the mountains.

"The game soon bored me and I left him there. I walked up and down the main street for an hour, meditating on the all-pervading sweetness and light of existence and the mutability of railroad time-tables, until I was disturbed by cries from the hall of pleasure I had last left. Hurrying back there—it is deadly dull waiting for a delayed train past midnight—I found the proprietor of the place strengthening himself in righteousness by kicking my singer into the gutter. As he had already kicked him into insensibility, which was all the victim, even, could have asked, I suggested that hostilities cease. They did not, so I accepted the pleasant opportunity of warming myself by thrashing the somewhat amazed proprietor.

"Tommy, when you give up being a journalist and become a newspaper man, by all means endeavor to get out-of-town details. They afford many pleasant and ennobling experiences, and some time it may even be your knightly fate to bark your knuckles against a bumpkin's head in defence of a fellow-creature who is as drunk as he wants to be.

"I made the silent singer as comfortable as the facil-

ities of the gutter permitted and resumed my walk, my pleasant meditations now enriched with reminiscences of the last time I had seen my singer. He had taken the leading part in a society drama played by swell amateurs for a fashionable charity. I had reported the affair.

"When I went to the station, at two o'clock, the agent told me that I had an hour longer to wait, so I was not half-sorry to find my Lost Chord on the platform. I wanted some one to talk to, and the station-agent wanted to sleep.

"The Lost Chord was in a pretty bad way. The warmth of his cups had left him, and his clothes not being weather-proof, he was rapidly shaking himself to pieces. He had forgotten the kicking; the superior agony of incipient delirium making the ache of bruised bones a matter of indifference. It seemed both wise and charitable to assist him to expire with a flash, rather than let him merely cease to exist for lack of energy to shiver longer, so I gave him my flask—a full one. He was soon as bold and happy a being as—as you were a few minutes ago, Tommy, and when my train came along, he was reciting poetry with fervor and eloquence. His bared and battered head was upturned to the glinting stars, and his rag-covered body was gracefully erect. I was grateful to—my flask.

"The train was scarcely under way when there was a sudden jerking of the bell-rope, and a pale-faced brakeman whispered to the conductor: 'A damn tramp tried to jump us and fell between.' I went back with the train hands, and as I leaned over him the Lost Chord smiled and murmured:

> "'Drink! for you know not whence you came, nor why!
> Drink! for you know not why you go, nor where.'

"In a few minutes he went—where?—and they shovelled it off to one side of the track."

"Otto! Fill Mr. Paget's glass."

"No, Patsy! Let's go home."

Truly art is long. The old man waited many years, bore many disappointments, saw many of his dreams shattered—but he had his reward. The story of his life comes from *Macmillan's Magazine*.

MY OLD DRAWING-MASTER.

It is many years since, but I remember as though it were but yesterday the long, low, dusty room to which I, with about a dozen other girls, went for our weekly drawing-lesson. I think the school was chiefly patronized by artisans—carpenters, decorators, designers in a small way, who toiled of an evening to improve themselves in some sort of drawing which might be useful in their business. We, the young ladies, certainly did not toil, neither on the whole did we greatly improve. I used to wonder how our master could go on, week after week, patiently correcting the same mistakes, cutting the blunt chalks, trying in his gentle, weary voice to impress the most elementary rules on the minds of his careless pupils.

He was a very little man, slightly bent and twisted, with a delicate refined face and bright eyes, who spoke English with a foreign accent. We did not know his history, or even his country, or how he happened to settle in our smoky northern town. It seemed to us that he had lived there always, and in all his life had done nothing but teach, teach, teach.

"Are you never tired of it?" I asked one day.

"Tired—yes!" he said with his habitual smile. "But one must not mind being tired, Miss Ellen; it is my work, you see."

"Such unrewarded work!" I could not help saying it, as I looked down the long rows of desks, on which lay drawings in every stage of badness. His eyes followed mine with a funny twinkle in them.

"Certainly, I do feel sometimes that it would be pleasant to teach those who truly wished to learn. They none of them work, those young ladies. Ah! in our old studio it was different. What ambition! But——"

Mr. Hirsch stopped short, shrugged his bent shoul-

ders, and began to put away the drawings and prepare the room for his next class. I remained to finish a chalk study; I think I was the only one of his lady pupils who worked with zeal. Presently he came up and looked over my shoulder.

"Pretty well!" he said. "You have a feeling for form, Miss Ellen. It is a pity you do not devote more time to painting; you might perhaps do something."

"Do you really think so?"

"Well, it might be so, with time and pains," said my master slowly. "You are receptive. If we cannot create, it is always something if we can receive and distribute. And I have perhaps a few secrets—I have learnt something. I am no artist myself; but I would like, if it may be, to make one artist."

"But," I ventured to ask, "why are you no artist, you who know so much? Why do you not yourself paint?"

He spread out his hands, smiling. "It is too late—I am old—and I have no time for painting. Once indeed I had my dreams—but not now."

"Ah, what a pity!" I said.

"Not at all—no, when one grows old one does not cease dreaming; one's dreams alter, that is all. I have my dream always," said my master, still smiling.

We were interrupted by a ring at the outer door. Mr. Hirsch went and opened it, and after a short parley with some one outside, returned, carrying a huge square parcel. As it seemed heavy I went to his assistance, and between us we got it into a little inner room which he reserved for his own use.

"This is my own business," he said. "My pupils might laugh at it, though I have no reason to be ashamed. You see, I do whatever work comes to my hand." As he spoke, he took off the cloth that covered the parcel, and disclosed a large wooden panel on which was faintly discernible a painting, representing a swan with two necks, swimming in a very blue river. It was a sign-board!

"This poor swan looks just ready to sing his death-song, or perhaps I should say songs, since he has two throats," said my master; "but I am going to make him young again."

"*You* are going to do this!" I exclaimed.

"One must live," said Mr. Hirsch cheerfully, "and one must help others to live. This picture will possess one advantage; it is sure to be hung. There are many artists who would be glad if they could say as much as that of their works."

A few days later a note, misspelt and in a cramped foreign hand, signed *Célie Hirsch*, informed me that the next drawing-lesson must be put off as my master was ill.

"You had better go to-morrow and inquire for him," said my father. "Take a bunch of grapes with you."

I had never before been to my drawing-master's house; the rooms where we took our lessons were in another part of the town. The little slipshod girl who answered the bell, instead of replying to my inquiries, merely rapped at a door in the entrance passage, called out, "You're wanted, madam," and disappeared. A high-pitched voice called "Come in!" I opened the door and found myself in a tiny sitting-room. By an empty grate sat a woman neatly dressed in shabby black, who rose hastily when she saw me. "Pardon, mademoiselle!" she said. "I had not expected a visitor; forgive me that I did not open to you. I am lame, I walk with difficulty, and to-day I am tired." She had a crutch by her side and seemed infirm and old, though, as I afterward found, her age could not have exceeded forty-five.

She told me that Mr. Hirsch was in bed with bronchitis, but she hoped he would soon be able to resume his lessons. She apologized for asking me into a cold room: "He needed the fire up-stairs." When I opened my basket she held up her hands with delight. "This is indeed goodness; only this morning I was thinking, if I had but some grapes for my husband!" She took them with a tender touch, almost a caress. "It is so long since I have held grapes in my hand," she said; "it is as if I were once more in France. Will mademoiselle do me the favor to sit down while I take them to monsieur? He will like to make you his thanks." She spoke slowly, with a French accent much stronger than her husband's. While she was gone I looked about me. I think, at that time of my life, I had never seen so poor a room. It had in it,

with two exceptions, nothing but the most absolutely needful furniture, and that of the homeliest. These exceptions were striking. The first was a handsomely carved and gilt frame containing the head, apparently a portrait, of a young man sketched in charcoal. The other was much more remarkable. It was an oil-painting representing a group of French peasants returning from the harvest-field. Even I, ignorant as I was, could perceive that it was a work of great power and beauty. Its delicate pearl-gray tones so perfectly harmonized, its tender restrained feeling riveted my attention. I was still looking at it when Mrs. Hirsch returned.

"Ah!" she said, "that was painted by my first husband. He was a great artist. You never heard of him? It is because he died young, before he was appreciated. If he had lived, he would have been famous. Mr. Hirsch says so, and he knows," she concluded with an odd mixture of pride in her two husbands. "And that," she added, turning to the charcoal sketch, "is his son, my Anatole, drawn by himself."

"He, then, is also an artist?"

"He is a student. He has his father's genius; some day he too will be an artist."

After this first visit, for one reason or another I often went to my drawing-master's house. His cough hung long about him, and before he could go out he offered to give me and his other pupils lessons at home if we chose to come. I gladly availed myself of the offer. Mrs. Hirsch was usually present, busy with some fine needle-work, which no doubt helped to eke out the family income. I observed that my master paid her a certain deference, and almost always addressed her as *madame*. As both husband and wife were constantly occupied, I could not at first understand why they seemed so poor. Nothing seemed to come amiss to Mr. Hirsch. Sometimes he would be painting a sign-board, sometimes designing a play-bill, or drawing ornamental headings for tradesmen's circulars. Once, in an out-of-the-way corner of the town, I came upon him engaged in freshening up the portrait of a huge salmon which ornamented the window of a small fishing-tackle shop. On this occasion he seemed a little embarrassed, and

I turned quickly away and never afterward referred to our meeting.

Gradually I learnt the meaning of all this industry. Anatole, the young original of the charcoal portrait, was being supported as a student in Paris at the expense of his step-father. "He will be a great artist, I am sure of it," said Mr. Hirsch to me. "It is our duty to develop his genius."

"Does he know how hard you work?" I asked. "Would he like you to do all this for him?"

"Ah—bah! It is nothing," said Mr. Hirsch, smiling.

"That is what he always says," said his wife; "but it has been everything to us—to Anatole and me."

One day, when Mr. Hirsch was out, she told me the story. How happy she had been with her first husband, the young artist just rising into fame, till he was shot down in the street on that terrible 4th of December, 1851; how Mr. Hirsch, his favorite pupil, had stood by his side in that hopeless fight for law and liberty and had carried him back, a dying man, to the little studio which had been so full of life and hope; how she had found herself left quite alone with her little boy of three years old. "I was an orphan, I had no one, no one," she said with falling tears. "I had been hurt by an accident; I was lame, as you see me now, and I could get no work. We nearly starved all that winter, I and the boy. I had sold all that we could sell except that picture;" she looked toward the painting on the wall. "It was his last: it broke my heart to think of parting with it; but I had made up my mind that it must go, when one day Gottlieb came, and asked if he might work for me and the boy. He said he owed everything to my husband and he would like to make some return. He had heard of some work in England as a teacher of drawing. There was only one way, mademoiselle, and I thought of my boy. We were married, and he has been the best of husbands to me. Since then we have had many struggles, but we have always had enough to live upon. Mr. Hirsch has tried everything. He wished to be a painter, but no one would buy his pictures, and the boy's education has cost much money; so he has had

to turn his hand to anything that came. I have often been sorry; but then he is not a genius like my first husband and my boy."

One morning, coming early to the drawing-school, I found Mr. Hirsch hard at work before a small easel. Contrary to his wont, he was so absorbed that he did not notice the opening of the door, and I came quite close to him before he stirred, close enough to see that his usual air of smiling patience was exchanged for an expression of intense eagerness which made him appear at least ten years younger. When he noticed me he looked up like a schoolboy caught in some mischievous trick.

"You find me wasting my time sadly, Miss Ellen; but I had really no work till you came, so I amuse myself a little."

I looked at the easel: on it was a small half-finished oil-sketch, an old woman selling flowers in the street.

"It is a little figure that I saw," said my master, as if apologizing for his occupation. "You see, she is old, and she is ugly, and so is the street she sits in, but the flowers brighten all. It pleases me to paint them, though I do but waste my time."

"Surely it cannot be waste of time to paint like this."

"Not for a student. For a student I might even say that this would be good work. But for a painter it is nothing. Once I thought to be a painter, but I began too late, and it is all at an end now. It needs much labor, very much labor. I have not had the time."

"You did not work at it long?"

"Three—no, four years; that is nothing, it needs a lifetime. I was a poor boy, a farmer's son in the Vosges, and I used to draw, many a time, when I should have been minding my work. I am sorry for it now. When I came to be a man I went to Paris, and found my way to an artist's studio. He took me in as his servant, to mix his colors and clean his brushes and go on his errands. I was happy enough to see him paint, and try at odd times to imitate him; but when he found out that I loved painting he got another lad to serve him, and made me his pupil, and treated me as a brother. Those were happy days, indeed; but he died, and since then I have had to get a

living for myself and my family, and I could not do it by art."

Now I understood why Mr. Hirsch worked so hard for his step-son. I understood too, that he had given the boy much more than time and labor; he had given his dearest wish, the dream of his life.

After I had surprised his picture on the easel, Mr. Hirsch would sometimes let me look over his portfolios. They were full of sketches, some of them memorials of his student days, some done at odd times in his years of teaching. There were also a few finished pictures which he had failed to sell. My father, who was something of a connoisseur, came and looked at them, and bought two of the pictures.

"Really, Mr. Hirsch," he said, "I had no idea you were such an artist, or I would have given myself the pleasure of looking at your work sooner. It is a loss for our town that you do not continue painting."

A faint color came into my master's pale face, and his eyes sparkled. It was long since he had had the pleasure of talking with one who really knew anything about pictures; and then the sale of his work was a solid proof of appreciation.

"I have sometimes thought," he said in a hesitating way, "since my son has had the good-fortune to do a little for himself lately, that I might venture to spend some of my leisure in that manner. Your generosity, your kind words," he added with a low bow to my father, "will make it easier."

A few weeks later Mr. Hirsch beckoned to me mysteriously from the door of his little inner room, the same where he had repainted the two-necked swan. I laid down my brush and went in. He was standing before an easel on which a picture was dawning. The subject was the same as the little sketch I had before seen, an old woman with flowers. "This subject haunts me," he said; "the flowers which brighten dull lives, the beauty which God sends into our dreariest streets; I think perhaps I might be able to paint it. If I could put into my picture all that I can see in the face of the old woman who comes to sit to me, there should be something in it to touch the heart; but that is very hard."

All that autumn and winter Mr. Hirsch worked at his picture whenever he had any spare time; and my father managed to sell a few sketches for him, so that he might allow himself more leisure for this happy toil. It was wonderful to see how the return to his beloved art transformed him. He held up his head and seemed bright and almost young. I sometimes felt sorry when I looked at him, and saw how sanguine he was growing. In his rapt attention to his work he appeared to forget what he had once told me, that it was now too late for him to become an artist.

"I shall send it to the Academy," he said one day when it was almost done. "That is best. It may not sell, but at least people will see what I can do; it will make a beginning."

I remembered all that I had heard of pictures rejected, and wondered if he would have any chance, but it seemed unkind to damp his happy confidence.

When the picture was finished he asked my father to look at it. It was really a beautiful thing, full of feeling; but, as my father saw much more plainly than I, defective in many points from want of experience and long practice.

"How does it strike you? Have I made any success?" asked Mr. Hirsch eagerly. "Now the time is near I tremble; I think I have been a fool to hope."

"We should always hope," said my father kindly. "In your case I would hope much."

At length came the eventful day when the picture was screwed down in its wooden case, hopelessly beyond all reach of final touches, and dispatched to the London agent who was to send it in.

All through April I thought of it continually. Would it, by any happy accident, find a good place, a place where some connoisseur might see and praise it? I had heard that a good deal depended on size, and this picture was small. Surely the hangers would be struck by its touch of poetry, its signs of patient labor, and place it where it could be seen to advantage. My excitement could hardly have been greater if it had been my own work. When the Academy catalogue arrived (I had it sent down on the day of publication) my hand shook so much that I could hardly open it. I turned to the

list of names, but that of my old friend was not among them. I looked through all the long list of pictures from beginning to end, then looked again. In vain! I could hardly believe such a misfortune possible, and yet it was too certain. After all my master's care and pains, his picture, his dear picture, into which he had put so much love and thought, was not accepted!

Several days elapsed before I dared to visit him. At last I screwed up my courage and went.

To my astonishment he met me smiling, radiant. He held both his thin hands out to me. "I hoped you would come," he said. "I wanted to tell you our good news, you who will sympathize."

"What!" I stammered, wondering if some one had hoaxed him with the belief that he was successful, or if, by happy chance, there was a mistake in the catalogue. "I thought, I feared——"

"The news is but just come," he said. "Had you heard he was going to try? He would not tell us, lest I should be disappointed if he did not succeed." I looked to madame for an explanation. She sat with an open letter in her hand; her spectacles were wet, and tears were trickling unheeded down her cheeks; but her lips wore a smile of perfect satisfaction.

I was fairly bewildered. "Has some one got your picture hung after all?" I asked.

"My picture?" said my master absently. "Ah, yes, it has been rejected. I had almost forgotten. That bubble has burst; it was a silly dream; I ought to have known better than to fancy I could be an artist now. But I cannot think of disappointment on this golden day, this day of joy, when all my toil is rewarded. For twenty years I have worked and hoped for this. Anatole, our Anatole, has gained the *Prix de Rome!*"

"It is what his dear father had most at heart," said madame. "When first he saw him in his little cap he said, 'Célie, my friend, our son shall be a painter, he shall study at Rome!' And it is thou who hast done it, Gottlieb," she added, turning to her husband; "it is owing to thee! How can I ever thank thee?"

"Say no more," said her husband. "Has not his wish been mine for twenty years? Célie, when our Anatole is a great man he shall come to London; it is

in London that artists are appreciated. He shall have a gallery like Doré, but his pictures will be of another sort. And I will stand at the door and show the people in, and hear when they praise him; and I shall say, 'These pictures were painted by my master's son, who is also the dear son of my heart.' Ah! what happiness!"

Madame softly echoed his words. I left the two still smiling, weeping, laughing, in their little dingy room, while the sun shone in and lighted the dead painter's picture, and the portrait of Anatole, and the wrinkled happy faces of the husband and wife, gazing with delight on those two precious treasures.

Before the exhibition on which we had built such vain hopes was ended, my father had a severe illness, and during his slow recovery it was decided that he must live henceforth in a milder climate. Among the friends from whom we parted I was not least sorry to leave Mr. Hirsch and his wife, and I think that our regrets were mutual.

For several years we resided chiefly on the Continent, and during our brief visits to England I had no opportunity of seeing our old friends in the North. Mr. Hirsch, his struggles and his sacrifices, had long faded into a dim background of half-forgotten memories, when I found in a Florentine hotel a copy of an English newspaper, in which was noticed a newly-opened exhibition of pictures by a young French artist, M. Anatole ——. The painter was mentioned with praise, critical and discriminating, such as men are the better for reading; and in one short paragraph, coupled with a few words of fine and penetrating appreciation, was the name of my old drawing-master.

A rural wooing with a tragic ending. This story of a Kentucky feud was written for ROMANCE by Henry Cleveland Wood, a newly-elected member of the Story Club.

TWO MOUNTAIN RIVALS.[1]

FAMILY feuds of long standing did not die out with the Montagues and Capulets.

Perhaps nowhere in the New World have they been more vindictive, or longer perpetuated, than in some of the mountainous regions of Kentucky, where the quarrels of one generation have been handed down, like heirlooms, to succeeding ones, with many bloody graves on each side as witnesses to a feud's length and ferociousness.

Between the Hackets and the Trowers there had long existed such warfare. It had begun back in the time of the grandfathers of the present generation, and the original cause had been lost to sight, yet seven or eight of the different members of the two families had, from time to time, "bitten the dust" in a futile attempt at settling old scores.

At the opening of my story, the feud was in as unsettled a state as for years previous, although the difficulties in the way of a final adjustment seemed less formidable, in that one sole male representative of each house was left to maintain its honor and uphold its reputation for bravery.

The two young men were of almost the same age, and were well matched in physical proportions, being athletic and hardy—the united result of pure mountain air and much healthful exercise—with inherited fine constitutions.

Most of the time during early manhood, when blood is the hottest, Grove Hacket had been in another county, helping to denude the hills of their rich wooded coverings, but when he returned to the old neighborhood there were dubious shakings of the head among the knowing ones, and predictions of future trouble.

[1] Copyrighted by the anthor.

There seemed to be excellent grounds for such a belief when the two young men began to pay attentions to the same girl—a rivalry that is apt to produce discord, even between friends, and, therefore, is little calculated to soften an enmity of long standing.

Why they should both chance to bestow admiration in a similar direction, is a problem I will leave open for speculation; but it was a fact beyond dispute that the bright glances of the plumpest, rosiest-cheeked girl of all the hills about, pierced the vulnerable portion of each heart and held it captive. With a woman's subtle art, even though untutored, Miss Betsy Scruggs managed to lead each victim a merry dance of it, and to besiege each bosom with hopes and fears alternately. It was a harmless coquetry, however, and she did not mean that any trouble should result from it, so she gave both suitors to understand that any breach of the peace would at once be visited with her lasting and severe displeasure.

This fear of losing favor in her eyes prevented an open rupture, although the dark scowls that passed between the two men when they occasionally met, suggested the ominous clouds of a gathering storm.

So impartially were Miss Betsy's smiles and frowns distributed, that neither wooer was quite sure he was the favored one, and thus each was kept in a healthful state of suspense.

Miss Betsy strove to avoid favoritism. If she went to singing-school with Steve Trower on one occasion, she was apt to attend meeting with Grove Hacket on the next. The rivals had reached a tacit understanding regarding Sunday courting, so that one did not intrude upon the other. There was generally a sorrel horse hitched to the rail-fence one Sunday, and a roan horse the next, so that the passing neighbor could tell at a glance whether Hacket or Trower was the favored suitor for the day. These Sunday afternoons and evenings were periods of supreme happiness or torture to the two young men, their state of feelings varying according to the fortune or misfortune of their lot, as the case might be. It was either absence and the thousand unhappy suggestions of a jealous brain, or a presence made delightful by Miss Betsy's engaging

ways and pretty face. There was not entire idleness on these Sunday afternoons, for, when milking-time came, Miss Betsy took her piggin and accorded a gracious privilege to her attendant to loiter at the bars and entertain her, or, perhaps, to keep a hungry calf at bay while she milked. Miss Betsy was coquette enough to throw a charm over even this prosaic occupation, so that it became one of the enjoyable features of the day. On one occasion, as she sat and milked her "little cow with the crumpled horn," such as these mountainous regions develop, Grove Hacket leaned against the bars near by, and with a switch kept back an aggressive calf, which expressed its feelings at the great injustice done him by loud and frequent lamentations. He rather unwillingly divided his time between the calf and the pretty milk-maid, in whose direction he sent numerous glances of admiration.

"Thar's goin' ter be great times down ter Dry Crick Settlemint, nex' week come a Chuesday," observed Grove.

"Hez big meetin' begund down thar a'ready?" inquired Miss Betsy, glancing over her shoulder.

"Shuckins! no. Big meetin' don't come off till nex' month. Hit's a big show a-comin'," answered Grove.

"Shet up, now! I know better," cried his interested auditor, pausing for a moment in her occupation, and thereby cutting off the two streams of milk that flowed into the pail with a sound most tantalizing to the hungry calf.

"Yes, sirree!" continued her admirer loquaciously. "Si Parker war down thar t'other day, an' seed ther big picters hisse'f, a-tellin' all 'bout hit."

"I s'pose yer air a-goin'?" Miss Betsy remarked, after a few moments' silence.

"If I kin git good company, I mout," said Grove with subtle meaning.

"I 'low ef yer look 'round 'nuff, 'twon't be no powerful hard thing ter do. Folks is plentiful 'bout yere."

"Anybody hain't company," said Grove with artful emphasis.

"Folks is folks, though," remarked Miss Betsy. "One gal can go on weth foolishness an' sech 'bout ez well ez t'other."

"Well, I 'low ter go weth ther purtiest gal in all these yere hills ef she'll go weth me," continued Grove seductively.

"Thar is them ez says Malviny Peevler is right peart-lookin', though hit never struck me powerful," said Miss Betsy in audible soliloquy, apparently unmindful of her beau's presence.

"I warn't thinkin' o' no Malviny Peevler," retorted Grove.

"Sis Rice hain't no rale homely gal, ef her hair is red an' her nose turns up some," continued Miss Betsy reflectively. "Saw! Piney, saw!" she added soothingly to her restless cow.

"'Tain't no Sis Rice, nuther," interposed Grove with a faint touch of reproach in his tone. "I'd just make a bee-line fer yer, Miss Betsy, an' yer knows hit."

"La, Mr. Hacket!" exclaimed Miss Betsy with a toss of her head, and stopping long enough to send a disturbing glance in the direction of her admirer. "Whoever did hear o' sech foolishness?"

Before the milking was over, however, Miss Betsy had consented to accompany Mr. Hacket to the circus at Dry Creek Settlement, on Tuesday of the following week.

In consequence of this engagement, Steve Trower found his plans sadly shattered when he presented himself the next Sunday and asked for Miss Betsy's company to the circus. His disappointment was so evident that Miss Betsy's heart was touched, and she advanced the soothing suggestion that "big meetin' warn't a hundred miles off, an' she s'posed folks would want to go to hit, too."

Added to Steve's sense of great disappointment was the feeling that his rival had taken undue advantage of him. Grove Hacket had gone with Miss Betsy to the circus the year before, and this should have been his own opportunity, and his heart was filled with a deep resentment.

Now Steve was something of a schemer by nature, and incited by jealousy and anger, he began to cast about for some plan whereby he might circumvent his rival and accomplish his own ends. His cunning at once suggested for attack the weakest spot in his ad-

versary's character. He knew Grove's fondness for "moonshine" and his propensity to get on a spree now and then, and, as he had now been sober for quite a while, he was probably in a fit condition to be tempted successfully.

Early Monday morning Steve rode over to Bill Warner's, carrying with him a brown jug of innocent appearance but disreputable contents. Bill was a harmless, good-for-nothing creature, fond of his dram and of sweet idleness. He lived near Hacket's, and had frequently joined him on his sprees. When Steve rode away from Bill Warner's he left the jug behind, and his host's parting words were:

"I'll fix him fer ye, sartain an' sho'."

By four o'clock on Tuesday morning Miss Betsy had bestirred herself and the rest of the household in her preparations for an early departure, as the road was a long and rough one and a start by daylight was necessary.

After breakfast Miss Betsy arrayed herself in her most bewitching toilet, in honor of the occasion. This gala attire was a yellow calico dress the shade of a sunflower in all its pristine glory, and a straw hat trimmed with immense pink roses and pea-green ribbons. Her hands were incased in blue yarn mits. The general effect, as may well be imagined, was a striking one. Thus arrayed, she got out her riding-skirt and sat down to await her escort, who was already past due.

The faint streaks of light in the east deepened into broad roseate bands, while the mists slowly lifted from the awakening world, like curtains of gauze rolled up from some fair picture, and yet no sign of the tardy cavalier. As the moments sped Miss Betsy grew quite restless and kept her father busy ambling down to the stile to look for her missing escort. Finally, "Pap" Scruggs discerned an approaching horseman leading another animal, and Miss Betsy came down to the stile to be in readiness, as it was already so late. To her surprise the rider proved to be Steve Trower instead of Grove Hacket.

"Hello! hain't ye gone yit?" he exclaimed. "I 'lowed yer'd be off 'fore day."

"How's a body ter go 'thout company er wings

nuther?" asked Miss Betsy with evident irritation. "Hev yer seen anything o' Grove Hacket this mawnin'?"

"Why, hevn't he turned up yit?" questioned Steve in well-feigned surprise.

"Not ez anybody knows," cried Miss Betsy petulantly.

"Ef that's ther case, hit's likely yer won't sot eyes on 'im ter-day. I'm jest minded," continued Steve, as with sudden thought, "I seed Bill Warner las' night, an' he tole me Hacket war on a powerful spree agin."

"Well, good mercy! now ain't that beautiful?" cried Miss Betsy indignantly.

"Jes' lissen ter me," said Steve persuasively, after a moment's reflection: "yere's a mare a'ready saddled an' bridled, an' she's a good 'un, too. Now w'at's ther use ter stay at home when yer kin jump right on her an' go straight ter ther show, which hit's a pity ter miss fer a fellow w'at likes licker better'n a promise."

Miss Betsy looked anxiously up the road, then wistfully down it.

"Hit must be licker w'at's keepin' 'im, elsen he'd ha' been yere 'fore this," she said in hesitation.

"Ef folks is a-goin' they'd oughter be on ther way thar," said "Pap" Scruggs between the puffs of his cob-pipe, and seemingly addressing his remarks to space.

"They say ez hit's a powerful big show," added Steve with alluring impressiveness. "Thar's ever' single varmint on ther whole face o' ther yeath yer kin see, an' ridin' an' tumblin' an' eddicated dogs, till yer'd die a-laffin' at 'em cuttin' up ther shines."

The picture was a most alluring one.

"Pap, I'm a-goin' weth Mr. Trower, that's jes' w'at I am," said Miss Betsy, gathering up her riding-skirt.

Fully an hour later Grove Hacket rode up to the Scruggs homestead. He was still under the influence of liquor, and showed unmistakable evidences of a night's debauch.

When he learned that Miss Betsy had gone away some time before in the company of Steve Trower, he turned about without a word, and, giving his horse a savage cut with a switch, galloped back in the direction of his home.

"Thar's goin' ter be trouble yit 'twixt Steve an' Grove jes' 'bout this very thing," muttered "Pap" Scruggs, as he slowly retraced his steps to the house, dubiously shaking his head as he went.

Some two weeks after this incident, Hacket was out one day with his rifle for the purpose of bagging some game, and also to freshen up a bit after his long spree. He had learned from Bill Warner, in a moment of maudlin confidence, of the part his rival had played in the matter of his recent spree, and a desire for revenge burned fierce within him. He had also possessed himself of the idea that Miss Betsy Scruggs was a willing abettor in the shabby trick that had been played him, and his feelings were undergoing that strange process by which hatred can be finally evolved from love.

He had seen neither of the parties since, and it was with surprise that he came suddenly upon Steve Trower taking a bath in one of the shady pools of a creek whose source was in the higher hills beyond. Grove's presence was no less unexpected to the bather. They looked at each other in silence for a moment, Steve standing in water up to his waist and Grove on the bank above him.

The bank was a little overhanging at this point, and Steve, with apparent indifference, moved slowly toward it, each step bringing the water further up on his body and placing him more in the shelter of the bank.

Grove was not oblivious to this, and slowly raising his rifle to his shoulder said:

"Stop right thar!"

While the words were ominous, the action was more so, and Steve's head involuntarily disappeared under the water like a loon which had espied a foe.

Presently he came up within a little distance of where he had disappeared, while Grove, with a grotesque leer, deliberately brought his gun to bear on him again, and Steve as promptly ducked his head under the water.

This odd performance was repeated several times, until Steve began to show unmistakable signs of fatigue, panting and blowing as he came to the surface.

As yet no word had been spoken.

"Gittin' skeerce o' wind, is ye?" demanded Grove

with exultant satisfaction. "Yer thievin' skunk, I'm nigh a mind ter make yer drown yer triflin' carkis, I hev. Dip!"

Steve promptly obeyed.

Again and again Grove compelled him to go down under the water, each time giving vent to loud guffaws of delight which echoed through the valley.

Between these outbursts of merriment Grove kept up a running commentary:

"Lordy! Lordy! this is a heap sight funnier than ther show, hit air. Hit's better'n them eddicated animiles. Ef yer gits a little wet 'twon't hurt yer much. I'll git Bill Warner ter fotch yer down some prime ole red-eye, but don't yer git on no spree, kase yer mout not be able ter keep yer 'pintment weth me. S'pose yer dip down agin—that's hit—only yer mustn't keep yer noggin under ther water so long, fer I'm 'feared yer health'll be so porely yer can't go down ter Dry Crick Settlemint nex' show day, which would be powerful onfortunit on Miss Betsy Scruggs, now wouldn't hit? Mus' yer dip down agin? Well, don't stay thar long, fer I want ter see yer purty face soon. Here yer come up. Now s'posen yer try divin' onct more—hit sorter 'minds me of a turkle slippin' offen a log. Danged ef this hain't a sight better'n any show I ever seed. Ha! ha! ha! how he kin dive."

Finally, utterly exhausted and breathless, Steve caught hold of the bared roots of a tree projecting out over the water.

"Ef yer air goin' ter shoot, why, shoot!" he cried sullenly. "W'at's ther use o' foolin'?"

"'Tain't none," answered Grove laconically, "though hit do look like a pity ter spile a nice love match, liken yer an' Miss Betsy hev got up. I'm arter game, howsomever, an' I don't 'low ter miss none w'at comes in my way. This air a good time, too, ter settle up some ole scores w'at hev been runnin' fer a long time back."

He slowly lowered his rifle, examined the lock carefully, then the priming, and deliberately raised it to his shoulder again.

"Ready, is yer? yer pizen-headed rattler!" he called out to Steve, who through all these preliminaries had maintained a stoical bearing.

"Shoot! yer sneakin' coward," the bather called out unflinchingly.

The next instant the sharp report of a rifle rang out through the silent valley, awakening the echoes among the hills.

Grove stood and watched the spot where Steve once more went down, until the circling rings widened and widened, and broke upon the further bank, then, when the troubled waters grew calm again, he slowly shouldered his rifle and strode away

Russians are great gamblers, as is proved by this story, which comes all the way from St. Petersburg, and was printed in the New York *Tribune*.

A GAME OF CARDS.

AMONG the traditions of the gaming-room of the St. Petersburg Yacht Club is the story of the Prince T., an aide-de-camp of the late czar and one of the most distinguished officers of the Russian army, who in the course of ten hours lost estates, fortune, and even his family plate and jewels to a Mr. A. Finally, in a moment of utter desperation, he remembered that his opponent was one of the most devoted admirers of his beautiful wife, and to the consternation of all who stood around watching the game, he exclaimed:

"I stake my wife! Yes," he continued, "I mean what I say. I have nothing left with which to support her. I stake her against the sum total of my losses of this night."

"I agree," replied Mr. A. slowly, and with manifest efforts to appear calm. "But as the stakes are unequal, since even my winnings of to-night fall far short of the value of your present stake, permit me to add 500,000 roubles."

The game proceeded, and finally, amid the most intense excitement of all present, the prince rose from the table—a loser.

"I will keep my word," he said quietly, and bowing courteously to his adversary, he left the club.

On the following day he tendered his resignation as a member of the imperial household, instructed his lawyer to offer no defence, but to admit everything, in case the princess saw fit to begin a suit for divorce for having been staked at a game of cards, and left St. Petersburg for the headquarters of the army of the Caucasus, where fighting was going on. Three weeks later the news of his death was received at the capital, and as soon as the proper period of mourning had expired, his widow expressed her readiness to confer her hand upon Mr. A., and thus complete the payment of the unfulfilled portion of her dead husband's card debt.

A sea story full of dramatic interest, in which are displayed the greatest and meanest of human qualities. It was written for *Romance* by Robert Denig.

WRECK OF THE U.S.S. CURRITUCK.[1]

My last summer's outing was spent cruising in a yacht in the Carolina sounds. On the 5th of August, as we came to anchor for the night, a small boat approached us from the eastward; when within hailing distance its sole occupant called out:

"Have you a doctor on board?"

"Yes," I answered. "What is wanted?"

Coming alongside, the man in the boat said:

"Will you come at once to Life Saving Station No. —? Our captain, we reckon, is dying."

Without a word I took my seat in the skiff and we were off at racing speed, for the oarsman was a master of the art. We did not reach the station till nearly eleven o'clock. During our walk across the sand spit my guide told me something of the man I was to assist.

"He's a queer one, our captain, but there ain't another so good in the whole service."

I soon came to believe, from his account, that one more daring, more enduring, more vigilant, more successful, or more devoted to the calling could not be found. His own life was constantly risked; indeed, his desire to save life was a monomania. I became eager to see him and hastened my steps, hoping that I might be the means of saving so valuable a person.

I was shown into the upper room of the station, and there, stretched on a cot, lay a man of medium height and rather slight, though sickness may have caused this apparent emaciation. His delicate but weather-beaten features were lighted by a pair of clear brown eyes. On my greeting him he said: "Take a chair, doctor; put it close beside me."

A glance told me he had only a short time to live, but I proceeded to an examination.

He was dying from pneumonia due to an extraordinary exposure a month before, while rescuing

[1] Copyrighted by the author.

people from a German bark cast away near his station. Four of his own men had been lost in the struggle. I raised him gently, and on baring his breast and back to facilitate my work, I started with a cry of astonishment.

His whole body was tattooed—not with ballet-girls, crucifixes, or goddesses of liberty, but with plain, prosaic, monotonous tally-marks 𝍸 𝍸 from shoulders to hips, 𝍸 𝍸 from neck to waist.

"Yes, doctor," said he, "that is my record, and there is room for more." Then a wild look came in his eyes as he asked: "Can't you save me, doctor, that I may add some more? No, no," he continued, sinking on his pillow, "it is finished, it is finished! *Three hundred and seven!* But I take my record with me, doctor!"

"Yes," said I, "it is finished. Your own noble life has been sacrificed for three hundred and seven of your fellow-beings. Would I could say as much."

My praise gave him no pleasure, and a troubled expression overspread his features as he asked:

"Are we alone, doctor? Will you hear my secret? For I must tell my story and be judged of men, as I surely will be of God, for I take my record with me, doctor—*three hundred and seven.*"

At this speech my guide of the evening left the room, and the captain at once began this strange narrative in a low voice which at times trembled with excitement.

In June, 1864, having finished a preparatory course of study to fit me for the junior class at college, I was, through my mechanical tastes, seized with a desire to enter the navy as an engineer officer. Graduating from the Troy Polytechnic School, I entered the navy in 1866, and was soon on board of one of our clipper-like war-ships, bound for China.

My ambition to do my duty properly was exceeded by my ignorance as to how to do it without interfering with the military routine. After a series of mishaps and more or less ridiculous conflicts with the captain, all went smoothly. But I learned the value on a man-of-war of strict, unbending discipline, administered with justice, as well as the evils of occasional brutish

severity administered with injustice. I discovered what many before me have discovered, that the iron rules of a war-ship are as often the shield of a coward as the powerful ally of the courageous.

Some officers play the part of a martinet possibly for effect and to curry favor, more often from a sense of duty and fear that their own judgment of right and wrong may err.

The truly brave man is moved to justice and tolerance by the goodness of his nature and is fearless in carrying out the dictates of his conscience. The timid and base man is quick to use the whip of discipline placed in his hands by the articles of the "Blue Book."

How do the men bear the lash of their obstinate heartless superiors?

My observation divided them into three classes. Those who obey with pride, feeling that they are a part of a great system. Those who obey with a dogged hatred of the system and submit, as it were, under protest, always bearing malice. Lastly, those who act as if born to a condition of abject servitude and who cringingly bare their backs.

But to my story. In my watch below there were fifteen firemen of various nationalities, ages, and dispositions, differing not at all, perhaps, from any fifteen of this class of men, brave, hard-working, willing, and respectful, except one who, I thought, was insolent toward me.

This man's name was Leonard. My attention was at first directly drawn to him by the apparent indifference with which he regarded intense heat. I recalled then the fact that I had frequently found him looking at me with considerable intentness. The more I watched him the more uneasy I became in his presence; he irritated me, though I must confess he obeyed orders, but always, I thought, with a sneer.

It is only on board ship that a man of intelligence lowers himself to the extent of hating his inferiors with a deadly hatred, and I began to hate this man.

He had a large angular frame and white skin, and features which to me wore, even in repose, a hard, cynical, defiant expression, and which my imagination told me would become ghoulish under the influence of pas-

sion. His head, covered with close-cut black hair, seemed to be but the continuation and flattening of his spinal column; his eyes, abnormally far apart, deep set, gray in color, with the whites of a dry, brickish red, were always fixed intently on whatever he looked at. His nose was prominent and of a Jewish cast; beneath it, his thin lips concealed two rows of perfect teeth, which glistened when he smiled. He grew to be a terror to me. I never looked toward him that his dry, red eyes were not fixed upon me. What made my dislike and fear of him more intense was the fact that no one else regarded him as I did. Though a man of few words, he seemed on good terms with his mess and watch.

I soon discovered that he had tremendous, almost superhuman strength and endurance, and I feared him the more. At first he did the duty of an oiler in my watch, but this I could not tolerate. To see him furtively watching me, now here, now there, from the midst of the revolving, jarring machinery, made my four hours' duty a waking nightmare. I came to believe that the sole object of his existence was to take my life; to do this I felt that he would sacrifice the whole ship's company. I determined to ruin him or drive him from the ship. I addressed him often, but always roughly, to shame and degrade him before his watch-mates. By repeated reporting I had him constantly under punishment. I gave him double work; I reserved the hard work for this fiend. "Ah," I said, "I will break your spirit by undermining your strength." I would drive him to despair, but each persecution only seemed to make him the stronger.

When the ship rolled and pitched in a storm my fears, ever on the alert, became a fascination. I could see nothing but the glittering white teeth of Leonard down in the glaring, hissing stoke-hole, for he smiled when it stormed and smiled on me.

I longed for some incident that could be converted, justly or unjustly, into a serious offence ending in a court-martial with a sentence of years in the penitentiary.

At last my opportunity came. On the night of the 5th of August, 1867, we were off Madagascar, battened down, steaming away from the centre of a fearful cy-

clone. The sudden pitching and rolling of the ship were frightful; between decks the air was close and filled with sulphurous fumes from the fires.

Word came from the captain that the ship was running before a terrible gale without sails. To heave to was impossible, and our only hope was that the machinery, racing and pounding as it was, would hold out and keep her before the awful sea.

As I entered the engine-room for the mid-watch, the first object that caught my eye was Leonard standing in the ruddy glow of the furnace fires, naked to the waist, holding to a life-line and firing with skill and quickness as the steadiness of a moment would allow him the use of his hands.

As usual he looked directly at me. At the instant our eyes met the laboring ship gave a sickening lurch, a great volume of water in the bilges rushed over the floor plates between his legs, the furnace doors flew open, and a cascade of live coals fell hissing in the swashing water, obscuring in a cloud of vapor the gleam of hellish triumph on Leonard's grinnning face. But I understood the villain. "He has opened a sea-valve," I said, "and is sinking the ship, trusting to the raging storm to conceal his act."

At the next momentary steadiness of the vessel I stood before him, pale with frenzied excitement.

The scheme for his downfall that had taken me months to think out and arrange was now to be tried. I accused him in a loud voice of laziness, then cowardice. This, as I had rightly reasoned from its gross injustice, drove him into a passion. With a threatening look he grasped his shovel with both hands in the manner of a club. Immediately I said:

"Men, this mutinous villain is sinking the ship!"

Several firemen to whom I had been especially kind sprang between us, the master-at-arms was called, and Leonard was led away. He made no resistance.

During the commotion incident to his arrest, it was but the work of an instant to slip unobserved to the sea-valve and put the remainder of my plan in operation.

When an investigation was made a few minutes later they found the sea-valve open and a stream of water

four inches in diameter flowing into the ship, the key of the hand wheel gone, and a fine steel wire so adjusted that any one going through the motions of opening or closing the valve would be completely deceived.

Two men testified to having seen Leonard manipulating the valve some time before his arrest. His locker for clothes, by the way, was alongside this important adjunct to the machinery, and it was his habit, as I well knew, to steady himself in rough weather by grasping this valve wheel when he had occasion to use his locker. And thus my cunning calculations succeeded in forging a powerful chain of circumstantial evidence.

When confronted before the captain with the charges and the attendant array of testimony, he would neither admit nor deny them, but maintained a stolid silence —a circumstance that, along with his previous bad record, seemed convincing, and he was ordered into confinement.

That this man was my deadly enemy ceased to be an hallucination; my dastardly plot changed it to a sworn reality. I awakened to this truth with horror. How could my imagination have led me to commit such a deed? To retract was too late; it would only disgrace me; it could not save me. His absolute destruction was now my only hope; it became my only thought.

With feelings such as these I peered through the bars of the ship's vile brig and beheld with trembling satisfaction my victim ironed hand and foot, thus to remain until tried by a general court-martial. There were other prisoners to be tried, but for lesser offences, so he alone occupied the brig.

Each day they were all taken on deck to breathe the fresh air. How I begrudged him this bit of freedom! I bribed his keepers, and Leonard was at times forgotten, or if taken on deck was soon sent below for fancied or invented misconduct. I even bribed the cook to spoil his food. I prejudiced the captain against him so that his complaints were unheeded.

I watched with delight his strong frame succumb to this treatment, his face grow thin and haggard as his confinement lengthened from weeks to months.

Thirteen months had passed and we fell in with no ship, thus rendering the court-martial impossible.

I grew anxious at this long delay for fear that it might excite sympathy in his behalf, and so was greatly relieved at the orders we suddenly received to report to the flag-ship at Hong-Kong. We lay at this time in the harbor of Manila and were to get under way in the evening. At noon the order was countermanded. The day was clear and pleasant, the barometer steady, but the cautious skipper ordered a second anchor, then a third to be got; still the preparations for steam proceeded. About one P.M. we noticed a long swell from the south'ard, the horizon began to darken and the mercury to fall, the air became of that peculiar, depressing nature often felt before severe storms. Loose articles about the deck were secured, boats brought aboard, and topmasts housed. I heard the order given, "Take the prisoners below!" and I fancied a chill ran through me as the pale, thin, though still huge Leonard shuffled by me, with his clanking chains. I had managed it that extra heavy irons should be given him, yet they looked weak to me who dreaded him and knew his latent power.

At four in the afternoon a heavy black squall passed over the harbor, a lull followed, then came the hurricane, and nowhere in the world are hurricanes so severe as among the Philippine Islands. The storm lasted twelve hours, but such hours! The mercury fell to 28.17. The scene on deck was a chaos of the elements. Hissing lightning, intense heat, torrents of rain; the very sea seemed lifted up and discharged before the crackling blast with the force of rifle bullets. No one could stand; officers and men crawled about on hands and knees to give and obey orders.

How the ship rode out a storm of such violence is a miracle.

Below it was hot and close, almost to suffocation. Full steam had been ordered and had to be used with great care to prevent breaking the machinery, for the heavy seas rolling by left the propeller spinning furiously above the water.

The half-hour calm as the storm centre passed over the ship was one of breathless suspense. Return the

storm must, and from a new quarter. Would she stand the shock?

By a skilful use of the steam power the captain prepared for the encounter. When it came she reeled almost on her beam-ends, shipping a heavy sea; two boats were literally blown in pieces from their davits; but she slowly righted and, swinging to the change of wind, settled once more to receive the tempest in her teeth. At this critical moment the tarpaulin over the engine-room hatch was torn from its fastenings, and, glancing up, I saw through the iron gratings the white face of Leonard incarnate with hatred, his eyes riveted upon me.

I staggered back with terror. But, I thought, he cannot harm me; the hatches are battened down and guarded, and when the storm abates he will again be in irons under renewed severity.

Still I was uneasy and longed for daylight; when it came the storm had broken and the sea was smoothing down.

The havoc wrought by the typhoon was appalling. Nearly a hundred craft, large and small, were totally wrecked. On shore as well as at sea many lives were lost. The town was stripped of trees and houses were blown to pieces. Considerable excitement prevailed over the disappearance of the prisoner Leonard. I inwardly rejoiced at what I thought was his deliberate suicide and my safety. Strolling the beach two days later in company with other officers, we found our starboard gangway ladder exposed for sale at a junk shop. Both of the ship's ladders had been swept away in the blow, but this one had caused much comment, *as its lashings had been cut and not stranded, as were those of the port ladder.*

Was this Leonard's work?

Never! nothing but a fish could have lived in such a surf.

And thus I tried to dismiss the matter from my mind, but with no success, for I was continually thinking of that demon. I grew excessively morose and timid, avoiding my messmates to such an extent that I know now they questioned my sanity. While on watch, the least unusual noise in the machinery would cause me

to start and my heart to beat violently. At times I thought I saw Leonard peering down the hatch as I last saw him on the memorable night of the hurricane. In my sleep I would see him drowning, his shackled hands clutching the air for help as he sank out of sight; more often I dreamed of walking a sandy beach and suddenly coming on the mangled corpse of Leonard lying just clear of the water.

These visions or apparitions threw me into such a state of mind that to meet Leonard in flesh or in spirit at any moment would not have disconcerted me in the least. For this reason, doctor, you can well believe I was delighted when, two months later, I was detached from the ship and ordered home.

My stay on shore was a short one. The exploits of some buccaneer schooner among the West Indian Islands was made the excuse for a sudden war-like demonstration on the part of the navy, and the following May found me cruising in the gulf.

In July, 1870, we were lying in the harbor of Vera Cruz, when one day I noticed a new face among the crew, the face of Leonard—changed somewhat, to suit perhaps his change of name, but unmistakably Leonard.

The chills of fright had not left me before my line of action was resolved upon. I repaired at once to the captain and reported him as a deserter, hoping for his immediate confinement.

The captain, an easy-going, good-natured officer, was preparing for a trip to the City of Mexico and promised to look into the matter on his return. It was a bitter disappointment, but knowing that two of Leonard's former shipmates were in the crew I kept my own counsel, hoping to trick them into giving testimony against him.

Several days after this I was invited by three other officers to go sailing in one of the ship's cutters.

Now, the cutters of the American navy at that time were built for show, to be kept clean and nicely painted, never for hard service. They were excellent racing-boats in smooth water, and that was all. In getting into the boat I trembled with apprehension, for Leonard was of the crew.

I resolved to get out, but already the cutter was

under way and fear of ridicule prevented my return; besides, no one, of course, knew aught of my relations with the man Leonard, or Barr as he now called himself.

We visited the islands of Sacrificios and Verdi, then continued our excursion to seaward. Near sunset, with Isla Verdi one mile and the ship five miles off, the officer sailing the boat called out, "Stand by for jibing!" There was a stiffish breeze blowing and I felt uneasy. The sheet was pulled home, and at the order "Let go!" the sail swung to port—stopped with a jerk—the boat reeled to leeward, water poured over the gunwale along its whole length, and the crew like fools began scrambling up to windward. "Keep down in the boat!" called the officer in charge. "Clear the sheet—*you, I mean!*" pointing as he spoke to the man Barr, who had not moved, and who, I now saw, was looking fixedly at me, with his foot braced with all his force on the coil of the main sheet.

With a cry of rage and a spasm of courage that has since surprised me, I sprang at his throat; it was too late; the overturning cutter made me miss my aim and I went clear over him into the water, just as his hellish grin disappeared beneath the capsized boat, and thirteen people were struggling for life in one of the most dangerous seas in the world.

It was some moments before we realized the peril of our situation. One of our number was missing, having to all appearances gone instantly to the bottom.

Divesting ourselves of superfluous clothing we made every effort to right the boat, but without success; we dived beneath it and made desperate attempts to unship the mast and cast adrift the anchor which, with six or seven fathoms of chain, was dangling from the bows, but gave up exhausted.

The choppy sea running made the mere clinging to the boat too great a tax on our strength to be long withstood, even by the strongest. We rigged lines about the cutter to cling to, and mounting one man on the keel to fly our signal of distress, a shirt tied to the loom of an oar, settled down to the grim facing of our fate. The puff that blew at the time of our mishap ceased, and the sea grew a trifle smoother.

No one had the courage to swim for the island. While debating in my mind this means of escape—for I was a good swimmer—a new terror seized us.

"Kick! for God's sake, kick!" shrieked one of the crew, and glancing behind me I saw the dorsal fin of a shark cutting the water not fifty yards distant.

No one said shark; all had not seen it; yet there was not a soul there but knew that this frantic kicking, shouting, and thrashing the water with boat-stretchers, performed at frequent intervals, was to frighten away these ravenous enemies of the sailor. Darkness increased our agony. At regular intervals, in lieu of our flying signal, we gave a cheer to attract any people who might be out in search of us.

These cheers grew weaker; the loud ring of hope in them sickened to a wail of despair. Silence was the rule, broken occasionally between our cheers by a word of encouragement to a fellow-sufferer, or the struggle of some one to regain his grip as a larger wave than usual swept him from the boat. Two of our number gave up and sank never to rise.

In my long experience with the sea, I have been quite as frequently astonished at the weakness of men in danger as at their strength. The first shock of fright seems to paralyze the muscles of some men, and though their courage returns, it does so without their physical strength. In spite of the fact that this kind of struggle depends on the individual and is in reality a dogged, determined hand-to-hand fight with fate, I have found that goodly fellowship in extreme peril is, though frequently met with, not so frequently recorded.

My own feelings at this time I cannot describe, for my eyes seldom quitted the villanous cut-throat, the author of this wholesale murder. I was ever on the alert for some new attempt on my own life and kept a firm grip upon my open clasp-knife.

About ten o'clock he let go his hold and swam off toward the island. Soon after we heard a faint hail to windward. It meant rescue, and, inspired with hope, our cheer rang out once more across the water, bringing to our side a Mexican pilot-boat, one of six boats, including three from the corvette, that were in

search of us. "Thank God it is my good-fortune to find you!" said the pilot. We thought the good-fortune lay with us.

Plucking us from the water, limp and exhausted, he revived us with a rousing drink of good brandy.

The officers and ship's company made up a handsome purse for the pilot and offered a large reward for Leonard. The islands were searched, but no clue of him was ever found. We sailed shortly after this for home, with the firm conviction that he had served a tough meal for some hungry shark.

This act of Leonard's in capsizing the boat by jamming the main sheet was an unpremeditated and foolish attempt on my life. His thirst for revenge had led him astray, little thinking that my chances in the water were as good as his own, for, though a coward by nature, fear of water was not known to me. He had simply murdered three innocent men.

Ah! doctor, the loss of those men off Vera Cruz was on my conscience; they haunted me night and day. I became morbid, thought of resigning the service, and even contemplated suicide to escape from my own thoughts. I had not the courage. O God! had I only had the courage. But, doctor, you have seen my record—*three hundred and seven* have I saved from certain death. What good? To preserve life does not restore the dead."

During this speech he had raised himself on his couch, bared his shoulders to show the tally-marks. As he finished he fell back exhausted and for some moments did not speak.

With my hand on his now fluttering pulse I resolved to dissuade him from further talk, when he abruptly resumed his narrative.

"The few months I spent on shore after my West Indian cruise are a blank. The dark forebodings of some awful fate never left me. At last my constant, gloomy reveries convinced me that I was but the tool by which the mysterious powers that rule us all were to work out the destinies of many of my fellow-creatures. For this reason my early orders to the *Currituck* in no wise astonished me. The first year of this, my last cruise, was a happy one; so congenial and pleasant

were all our mess that the demon of remorse was lulled to rest. It was only the long calm that precedes the storm.

We one day received orders to fit out anew for a foreign station. Every one, being filled with delightful anticipations of a pleasant cruise and anxious to be off, worked with a will. Three weeks found us ready for sea, the provisions on board, and the boats hoisted.

Permission to sail was granted by signal from the flag-ship, and ten o'clock one cold Friday morning we steamed slowly out through the assembled fleet, flying a general reply of "Thanks" to the many messages of "God-speed" that fluttered in bright colors from the yard-arm of each ship.

We found the weather outside bad. A south-east gale was brewing that before sundown was full upon us, with every prospect of a beastly night.

During the first watch, storm-sails were twice set and blown away. Speed was slackened to make her ride easy, for she made frightful work of it in the heavy sea. At eleven o'clock I turned in to snatch a little rest before the morning watch. Shortly after midnight—whether I had been asleep or not I cannot say—I heard with piercing distinctness the awful cry, "Breakers ahead, sir!" Then immediately in the clear tones of the captain came the order, "Hard down!" There was a shuffling of feet as men jumped to assist the wheelmen, but before she could answer to the helm a tremendous shock ran through the ship. We had struck! And with such violence that the foremast broke short off and went crashing over the side. The next shock as she rose and fell to the breakers seemed heavy enough to split her in two. In five minutes the seas had swept every boat overboard, crushed them or torn them away, davits and all. I had immediately gained the engine-room. Great seas were pouring down the hatches. The engines made a few useless revolutions, when her frame snapped and with a groan the engines came to a stand-still. A half-hour later the water had risen high enough to extinguish the fires and all hands made for the deck. The chances for life were very few; already many men had been washed off and drowned.

The main rigging was intact, and by a hard struggle I reached the shrouds.

The great roaring seas slowly tore the ship to pieces beneath me. The shrieks for help and the groans of the dying were constantly in the air, for, by some strange fatality, but few people were able to gain the rigging, the only part of the ship above the towering waves. Daylight revealed a sad spectacle. Ten survivors of the night clung here and there to the wreck. The decks were gone; the mizzen-mast had long since fallen; nothing was above water save the bowsprit, a portion of the lee bulwark, and the main-mast. On the beach, over a mile distant, was a little gathering of observers, powerless to render assistance. The wind had gone down, but the sea was more furious than ever. Still I thought, as did the two others with me in the rigging, that the main-mast would hold out till smooth weather. Foolish hope! Suddenly a great crested billow, the combined efforts of many, came sweeping the ship, the mast bent low, quivered an instant, then broke short. I felt myself falling rapidly through the air, then struggling beneath the water to get free from the mass of cordage. I came to the surface uninjured but alone. Alone I fought my way through the seething breakers which slowly washed me to the shore. The last one hundred yards against the relentless undertow and swift-running tide needed the strength of a giant. I was exhausted. The people on the beach I thought showed a heartless indifference to my peril. Presently I saw a long line of them, clasped hand to hand, dash out into the surf—I knew nothing more. A great roller had cast my unconscious body within their reach.

* * * * * *

Fifteen of us had outlived the ship. Those who had landed before me had been collecting the bodies of their less fortunate shipmates that strewed the shore for miles. My strength soon returned, and I, too, started along the sand, my eyes streaming with tears as I passed one after another of my once happy messmates. A half-mile walk brought me to a group of all that was left of the crew. They were greatly agitated. Two were kneeling over the corpse of a large man clad in the uniform of a seaman; these two were gesticulating wildly, while all were talking excitedly.

When I reached the group one man touched his cap and said: "Please, sir, here is a strange man, just washed ashore, sir!" My spirit sank within me; I was seized with an agony of fear. Bursting through the crowd I saw what I knew I should see—the dead form of Leonard! With a piercing shriek I sprang at his throat; my weakened body could not sustain my excited brain; I fell unconscious across his mangled corpse.

* * * * * *

Three months later, when released from the hospital, I resigned the service, changed my name, disappeared, wandered about the country, but could find no rest.

I entered the Life Saving Service, and see, doctor, see! *three hundred and seven—two lives for one!* My God! have I not atoned? I take my record with me!"

He had risen up on his cot, stripped off his shirt, calling, "See! doctor, see!"

Suddenly reaching beneath his pillow he drew out a small wooden box, exclaiming as he held it toward me:

"Here, doctor—quick! Here is my secret!"

Then leaping to the floor he yelled in terrible anguish:

"Breakers ahead! O my God! can I pass them?" and fell back dead.

The rest is soon told. The box contained eleven gold medals given him for bravery in saving lives; some from crowned heads and some from humane societies in different parts of the world; also a folded paper on which was written:

"TO BE OPENED AFTER MY DEATH BY THE PERSON WHO HEARS MY STORY."

I unfolded the paper, a single sheet of foolscap, at the top of which was pasted a clipping from a newspaper. Beneath this a fine, closely-written statement. The whole was as follows:

WASHINGTON, D. C., 18——,

The court of inquiry on the late U. S. S. *Currituck* has unanimously decided that no blame can be attached to any one on the ship. The loss of the ship was, in the opinion of the court, due entirely to some sudden, unusual, and unexplainable compass error, that threw the ship two points off her supposed course.

I, John Boyd, know the above findings of the court of inquiry to be true. The compasses of the *Currituck* were tampered with by a stowaway named Leonard; he was lost with the ship. His aim was to take my life; his motive revenge.

This is my plea for mercy.

I am celebrated for my great courage and daring as well as an unselfish devotion of my life to the rescue of people from drowning.

I know that this reputation is strangely at variance with my real temperament. I inherited a timid, suspicious nature, with little or no moral courage. Hard study impaired my health, and gradually an abnormal sense of fear developed in my mind and acquired an undue predominance over my nobler faculties.

The monotony of ship life, with its hours of idleness, fed and stimulated this unwholesome mental condition.

My imagination overcame my reason. I began imputing sinister motives to the simplest actions of those about me. It grew to be a mania, of which I was well aware but which I could not control.

At last I conceived the idea that a certain ignorant man was scheming to take my life.

A cowardly plot, cunningly executed, all but succeeded in condemning this man to a life in prison.

He escaped the sentence but became my mortal enemy.

Twice he attempted my life, with the frightful results set forth in my confession which will have been heard by the one receiving this my last will and testament.

First.—My body I wish thrown into the sea.

Second.—My money I wish given to the families of the enlisted men lost on the *Currituck*.

Third.—My medals I wish returned to the sources from which they came. They were not earned in the spirit that prompted their presentation. My motive was not humanity, but atonement for a cowardly act in my early life that led to the drowning of one hundred and fifty-three innocent people.

JOHN BOYD,
Captain of Life Saving Station No. —.

Those who love a lover will surely approve of this young man, the story of whose strange courtship is told by Albert Fleming in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

SALLY.

CHAPTER I.

It was a hot day in August, one of those reeking days that begin to be hot early in the morning and go on getting hotter and hotter till nearly midnight.

In the West End the heat did not much matter, because nearly every one was out of town; but in Cow Court, Gray's Inn Road, such a day mattered much. It meant a hundred additional smells, more disease, dirt, and drunkenness. It necessitated the emptying of the inhabitants into the court itself, with the certainty of many quarrels and pitched battles. When the shade temperature is eighty, and each room has six occupants, life within doors becomes burdensome; even Lady Clara Vere de Vere could scarcely maintain repose of manner under such circumstances.

In the year 1870 Cow Court and its unwholesome cluster of neighbors still clung to the skirts of Holborn and festered round St. Alban's Church, stretching from Gray's Inn Road to Leather Lane. The fine shops and warehouses that now adorn Gray's Inn Road then only existed in the brain of some city architect. Of all these alleys Cow Court carried off the palm for squalor, dirt, and general decay. You had to turn out of Leather Lane to get there; the turning was flanked on either side by a tavern, and these taverns, with their plate-glass and gilding, were the only things that were bright and cheerful in this region. If you explored farther you saw an archway on the right, made by sweeping away the ground-floor of one of the crazy tenements. This was the postern-gate to Cow Court. If any one ever got so far as this and retained his watch and chain, he always lost them on approaching this archway. A stout iron post stood in the middle of the archway, so that no scavenger's carts or dustmen's bar-

rows could penetrate into the court beyond. The boys played at leap-frog over the post, drunkards leaned against it, shrieking wives dodged pursuing husbands round it, and on Saturday nights the post was usually the only thing that could stand upright. Any one could see at a glance that Cow Court was a royal preserve in the kingdom of want, dirt, and misery. Down either side, wretched three-storied tenements leant and staggered; the windows were patched with rags and paper; the walls black and rotten with filth; and the sodden sidewalks were trampled into black, glutinous mud. An open gutter ran (or rather oozed and soaked) down the middle of the court; the flowers that sprang beside that foul stream were fever, contagion, and death. Frowsy men leant on the window-sills, cursing each other across the court; women, still more frowsy, stood gossiping shrilly in the doorways. The distant roar of the larger life outside filled Cow Court with a continuous murmur; but Cow Court had a continuous murmur of its own, made up of oaths, blows, and ribald songs.

On this particular evening the entire residential population were taking the air in the open court. They sat on the door-steps or lounged against the walls; but one lady was provided with a chair. When every one else has to sit upon the bare ground, a chair, even if unsteady on its legs, confers a certain air of distinction on its occupant. The lady seated on it was very shrivelled, yellow, and old; she was lame, too, and walked with a stick. The stick was recognized by the Court as a sceptre of sovereignty, for "old Biddy" was undisputed queen of Cow Court. She had lived there the longest, drunk the hardest, and swore oaths of an unsurpassable quality. In her palmy days, before her leg was broken, she had been victor in many a gallant fight; rivals had arisen, but Biddy had fallen on them and overcome them. Toward seven o'clock Cow Court pulled itself together for a little diversion. This generally took the form of a fight, sometimes originating on the pavement, and spreading contagiously until there was a general *mêlée;* but it was considered more consistent with recognized traditions for the quarrel to arise in-doors, and to be intimated to the outside world by the smashing of glass and the passage of bulky articles

through the windows; then Cow Court felt a glow of expectation, and exhorted the belligerents to come down and fight it out like men. A ring would be formed, and the fight conducted in a legitimate way. On such occasions Biddy was always summoned as queen of these most unchivalric tournaments.

On this August evening a young man was passing through Leather Lane in search of Cow Court. He was dressed in the latest West End fashion; but even the hideous chimney-pot hat, pointed shoes, and rigid collar could not disguise his comeliness. At a guess he was three-and-twenty. Being of a trusting nature, he allowed his gold chain to disport itself across his waistcoat, and his jewelled pin remained in his scarf.

Kenneth Gordon was down from Oxford and had been calling on one of the clergymen at St. Alban's, who had asked him to take a letter to a dying girl in Cow Court. He strode through the dingy street, sometimes asking his way of one of the residential ladies of Leather Lane, and always wrung a civil answer by the force of his genial smile. When he reached Cow Court, a pleasant thrill of excitement pervaded that locality: the watch and chain had survived Leather Lane, and now flashed gayly in the evening light; his pin held its accustomed place; his handkerchief gleamed white against his coat. He paused at the low archway: this was doubtless the place—there, at any rate, were the remains of its name. The "w" had dropped away from the "Cow," and much of the "Court" had vanished too. He stared in amazement at the throng of haggard, unwashed people—compared with this, Leather Lane was as Bond Street. At his feet ran the gutter, choked with filth; on either side the black crazy houses leant and staggered; dreadful odors and sights greeted him.

Inquiring of a boy, he learnt that Polly Turner lived at No. 7, and was escorted there by a crowd of loafers. The girl was dying; the stuffy room, crowded with friends, nearly dark and unspeakably miserable. Kenneth gave her the letter, but had to take it back and read it to her. In the presence of that deathly white face he felt all usual forms of speech to be useless. He held her hand for a minute, tried to say a few

kind words, and then felt that he had failed; but the gentle touch and words went straight to the girl's heart, and there rested until it ceased to beat.

When Kenneth left No. 7 a child was lying in a doorway just opposite. Dirt, famine, and ill-usage had effectually obscured the bloom of youth in her. Her face was so dirty that he could only see two large eyes flashing from a tangled mass of hair. This was "Sally." As she never owned a surname, it is impossible to introduce her more formally; if her friends wished to identify her with precision, they called her "Tim's Sally." Tim was her father, and his surname also was hidden in obscurity. Sally had heard that a young swell had come into Cow Court, and was waiting to have a look at him. On that she reckoned without her father, for Tim, coming down the passage behind her, enforced parental discipline by a vigorous kick on her shins. When you have kicked a body for ten years you acquire precision in the art, and Tim planted his kick with such exactness that the girl fell down on the door-step, and there she lay too listless to cry out. Now nothing is tamer or more monotonous than to waste good kicks on an irresponsive person; so Tim was aggrieved, and followed up his first kick by others, accompanying them with a volley of inspiriting oaths. The last kick must have caught Sally in a sensitive place, for she gave a sharp scream of agony.

"What's that?" cried a woman from an inner room.

"Oh," said another, "it's only Tim awaking up his gal."

As Kenneth left No. 7 he saw this kick and heard Sally's scream. He instantly strode across the court. Tim was girding himself up for more kicks. For the first time in his life he found this simple pastime of his interfered with.

Kenneth faced him sternly.

"Leave the girl alone, you blackguard! How dare you kick a woman?"

Not kick a woman! Cow Court was convulsed. Why, women were kicked every day; they expected it —accepted it as a law of nature. Tim and the bystanders paused for a moment to grasp the full absurdity of the idea; but only for a moment. Then Tim

turned on him like a wild beast, the veins in his great bull's neck swelling like cords.

"Who the —— are you? Can't a man kick his own gal? Get out of this, or I'll kick you too!" Then, in mere bravado, he lifted his foot to give the girl another refresher.

"Touch her at your peril!" cried Kenneth, flushing to the roots of his hair. In another moment he heard the thud of Tim's foot as it drove lustily into the girl, and at the self-same moment Kenneth's fist crashed into Tim's face, catching him on the jaw and sending him reeling backward down the passage. Then Cow Court perceived that there was a joyful prospect of a Homeric combat. In a few moments a ring was formed, and old Biddy was whisked aloft in her chair in the arms of two stalwart supporters. Kenneth's blood was up; he flung his coat and waistcoat to one by-stander and his hat to another. Cow Court accepted them with alacrity. Tim divested himself of some superfluous rags, bared his stalwart arms, and prepared to "smash the swell." Biddy surveyed both combatants with a critical eye; she knew the points of a man.

"Blood'll tell," she said oracularly, as she saw Kenneth straighten himself for the fight; he had boxed at Oxford, and was in fair condition, sound in wind, above all temperate and cool. The first round revealed to him that Tim fought in a very effective but utterly unscientific manner. He came at his enemy with a furious rush and planted terrific chance blows; but he left himself unprotected, and wasted a lot of strength to no purpose. Kenneth quietly bided his time, parried Tim's blows, and let him exhaust himself. Tim drew first blood, beating down Kenneth's parry, and landing on his temple with considerable force; still Kenneth kept his temper, and the cooler he was the more savage grew Tim; the ring cheered him on, exhorting him to go in and do for the swell. Kenneth now began to act on the offensive: letting drive, he caught Tim full on the mouth with all the strength of his sturdy left hand. His knuckles cut deeply into Tim's lips, and sent him crashing to the ground. Biddy rapped approval with her crutch; she loved to see a straight blow well planted. Tim was set on his feet,

rather giddy and dazed—he was not a pretty sight: his lips were like raw liver, and his face distorted with passion; what little steadiness he had he then threw to the winds, and Kenneth's next blow caught him full in the eye. After this he summoned his strength for one more furious onslaught. His blow was partially parried, but landed on Kenneth's shoulder; in reply, Kenneth caught him full in the forehead, felling him to the ground as a butcher does an ox. After this Tim did not come up to time; he was dragged off into some back region, and left Kenneth undisputed master of the field. Old Biddy took a pull at her pipe, expectorated, and said simply:

"Ah, blood *has* told!"

When Kenneth pulled down his shirt-sleeves, and turned to the crowd to demand his coat and waistcoat, they were not forthcoming—they had vanished. Then Kenneth flashed out, called them curs, sneaks, and thieves. Cow Court being accustomed to language of far greater pungency, preserved an unbroken calm. Then Biddy rose in her wrath, and steadying herself on her crutch, vowed, with many blood-curdling oaths, that the missing garments should be forthcoming, and that quickly—condemning the eyes and limbs of the thieves to infernal torments. The clothes appeared, and it was an ennobling sight to see the old crone stand up and order him to search his pockets while she asked categorically—"Purse? Wipe? Cigar-case? Watch? Chain?" etc. Each had been honestly replaced. Kenneth then shook Biddy by the hand and gave her a sovereign to distribute among her subjects.

Just then he felt something at his feet. He had almost forgotten the girl he had fought for: she had crawled to his feet and kissed them; there was a pathetic and dog-like fidelity in her look and gesture.

"Don't leave me here," she said. "He'll do for me worse nor ever when you're gone."

Kenneth paused. It was easier to fight than to know what to do with the damsel he had rescued; but he acted on impulse and threw his card to Biddy.

"There, mother, is my card; I'll take the girl and get a good home for her. That's my address; come and see her when she has pulled round."

"You have fought for her and won her," said Biddy. "I'll bet you're honest, and will do well by her—so take her."

CHAPTER II.

Kenneth lived in an old-fashioned house in Kensington, fenced from the outer world by well-grown trees. His father and mother had lived there before him, and had died there. Kenneth then asked his two aunts to live with him. Aunt Hannah was tall, bony, and vigorous; Aunt Matty fat and gentle. Hannah Gordon was well known in the philanthropic world; she was an active member of the Charity Organization; in fact, organization was her *forte*. Her special season began about November, when the first touch of winter woke up the poor. Then, take up what paper you might and ten to one, in some corner of it you would find Aunt Hannah enlightening the world as to what it should do or not do. She did not subscribe to African missions or soup-kitchens. What she gloried in were boards. School boards, poor boards, parochial boards, all kinds of boards; nothing she enjoyed more than ferreting out abuses and getting them remedied. Her abomination was promiscuous charity. It was beautiful to put her on the track of some philanthropic impostor, and observe with what holy zeal she would hunt him down to the death. It was she that opened people's eyes to the iniquities of that arch impostor, the archdeacon of Saratoga; before that he was the darling of West End drawing-rooms. When she took him in hand he exchanged Belgravian boudoirs for Holloway Jail and wasted much persuasive penitence on the chaplain. How many sham mendicants did she not expose!—pouncing upon them in the highways and byways, and giving them in charge with joyful alacrity. It was Aunt Hannah who plunged into a crowd in Piccadilly when a poor man, seized with an epileptic fit, was surrounded by a ring of sympathetic by-standers. Elbowing her way through them, she speedily seized him by the collar.

"Epileptic fit, is it? I'll soon cure you!"

"Leave the poor man alone!" cried a tender-hearted by-stander. "Don't you see he's foaming at the mouth?"

"Soap!" cried Hannah contemptuously; and lo and behold! the man did come out of his very artistic fit, spat out a lump of soap, and said:

"Let me go, can't yer? You're either the devil or old Hannah!"

"You're right!" she said triumphantly. "I *am* old Hannah, and, what's more, if ever I catch you having a fit again, I'll run you in."

Aunt Mattie was the very reverse of this. Aunt Hannah always alluded to her in her milder moments as "Poor dear Mattie," and in her more vigorous ones as "that fool Matilda." Matilda had never been on a board in her life; but if you looked down the subscription lists of any missionary society you would be sure to find her modest initials.

"I never put my full name," she said meekly. "Hannah makes such a fuss."

It was to this household that Kenneth brought Sally. The girl had fallen asleep as they drove along. Kenneth placed her on the seat; but Sally preferred lying on the floor of the cab, and coiled herself up at his feet like a dog.

When they got home Kenneth carried the tired girl in, and seeing that she was not fit for the drawing-room, placed her on the mat in the hall, where she lay —a little heap of rags, dirt, and towzled hair. As he entered the drawing-room he heard Aunt Hannah reading in a very emphatic voice the summary of a paper she intended to deliver at a Charity Organization conference next day. It was entitled "Sixteen reasons against the present system of out-door parochial relief." She had got as far as the tenth. Kenneth's entrance was hailed with joy by the long-suffering Mattie.

"Oh, here you are!" she cried. "Ten o'clock, and you were to be here by five."

"I've brought home a girl."

Aunt Hannah dropped the sixteen reasons, and ejaculated, "What?" Mattie started. Those five words might mean so much. With the calm that precedes a storm, Aunt Hannah took off her glasses, rubbed them slowly, and waited; but further explanation was interrupted by a scream from Aunt Mattie:

"Why, Kenneth, you've got a great cut on your temple, and there is blood on your collar!"

"It's nothing. I've had a fight. A brute was kicking a girl, and I licked him and brought the girl home. She's only a child."

Aunt Hannah put her glasses into their case with a snap and recovered her voice. "Brought her home! Is this house a casual ward or night refuge? Why, heaven bless us, the boy's gone stark, staring mad!"

Mattie had forgotten the girl and was giving her mind to sticking-plaster.

"I've left her on the mat outside," added Kenneth, apologetically; "she isn't as clean as she might be." Hannah strode to the door. The hall was pretty with fresh flowers, ferns, and bright tiles—its prettiness emphasized the incongruity of Sally's appearance. She was lying where Kenneth had left her; her one shoe was tied on with a bit of string, her frock was ragged, but the rents did not show, for her skin was as black as her frock. One frightfully bony arm fell across her knee and the other hid her face.

Mattie peeped from behind Hannah. Hannah said authoritatively:

"Get up, and be off with you!" Sally immediately gave vent to such a torrent of bad language that the two ladies rushed away and shut themselves in the drawing-room. Mattie began to cry, but Hannah seated herself rigidly in her arm-chair.

"This is too much, Kenneth!"

"It's getting awfully late," said Kenneth. "Suppose we don't talk of this till to-morrow. I'll get Bridget to wash Sally, and make her up a bed somewhere."

"Keep that thing in the house and be murdered in our beds, and have the house ransacked from top to bottom!"

"You can't turn her into the street at ten o'clock at night. Bridget can surely give Sally some supper and a blanket, and we will lock her in the back kitchen."

The aunts protested, but yielded. Sally followed Kenneth down-stairs like a lamb; but fresh difficulties arose with Bridget—they increased when Sally announced that she would tear anybody limb from limb who touched her. But when Kenneth said that he

wished her to be clean and neat, the child changed, and she informed Bridget that "she might boil her alive if the boss wished it done."

CHAPTER III.

Next morning Kenneth surveyed the position. Of course he could send Sally to a workhouse school, or to a refuge; but he did not want to let the girl he had won by his bow and spear drift away from him.

His old nurse was now living on a pension, and he resolved to send Sally to her. This seemed easy while he was dressing, but much less easy when he saw his aunts. Mattie was nervous, Hannah full of repressed vigor.

"It's a comfort that we still have spoons to stir our tea with," said the latter.

"I have been thinking about Sally," he began. "I am sure, Aunt Hannah, you will help me." He was interrupted by a sound of crashing china—a scuffle accompanied by piercing shrieks and the sound of hurrying feet. Aunt Hannah made a dash at the bell, exclaiming:

"Has the devil broken loose?" The door was flung open, and the servants dragged in Sally. She resisted violently, kicking, plunging, and swearing like a trooper. Bridget began: "And I do say, sir, it's too bad to go and bring home such scum, and expect decent people to sit with her. She's half killed James!"

"Yes!" cried the housemaid, "she up with a plate and broke it over his head, and he's a mass of gore in the kitchen this minute."

"Come here, Sally!" cried Kenneth sternly. They released her, and she stood before him with flashing eyes, and cheeks flushed with the glow of combat. An old dress of the cook's had been pinned round her—it was half torn off now; her matted hair had been combed out and rolled up—it lay on her shoulders now in a shaggy mass; and, as Aunt Hannah said, she looked a little demon. But when Kenneth took her in hand and spoke kindly, the flash in her eyes turned to tears. "Sally, what have you been doing? How dare you attack James?"

"What call 'ad he to lay 'ands on yer boots?"

"What on earth does she mean?"

"Why, sir, after breakfast James began to clean your boots as usual, and she flew at him like a tiger, tore them out of his hands, broke a plate over his head, and swore she'd kill him. And as for her language——"

"If he touches them again, I'll cut his liver out," interjected Sally.

"Now, look here, girl!" Aunt Hannah began.

"One moment, aunt," said Kenneth, turning Sally's tear-stained face to the light. At his touch the hunted, wild-beast look passed from her eyes; then he said, "Now, Sally, listen. I want you to forget your savage ways, and be a good child. If you use bad language, and frighten and hurt people, you must go back to Cow Court, and I shall be sorry I tried to save you from your father. I know it will be hard for you at first; but all good things are hard. You must tell James you are sorry you hurt him, and I'll promise that every day you are good you shall clean my boots yourself."

"Blest if I won't try, and I'll go this moment and ax his bloomin' pardon." And, so saying, Sally picked up her trailing garments and rushed out of the room.

"A perfect little savage!" said Hannah. "Two years at a reformatory might do good; but I doubt it."

"I thought I saw tears in her eyes," said Mattie.

"And what handsome eyes!" said Kenneth.

"Now just answer me this," said Hannah. "What on earth made you bring this vagrant here? You plunge into some filthy court, get your head cut open, and have this creature flung on your hands. If it is sentimental rubbish, you are a bigger fool than I thought you. If you flatter yourself it's philanthropy, you have begun at the wrong end."

"It is a little of both. You do your philanthropy in a scientific, wholesale way. I am beginning mine with a small retail sample. And it is sentiment too, for I feel rather like a knight who has rescued a maiden, and is forbidden by the laws of chivalry to abandon her."

"Then, by the laws of the Round Table, the knight is bound to wed the maiden, and—I wish you joy of your bargain."

"Well, aunt, let Sally have a month under your supervision, and then we will hold another meeting upon her." The aunts at last reluctantly agreed to give her a trial.

CHAPTER IV.

The month passed, and even Aunt Hannah owned that there was "good stuff" in that girl. Mattie had her baptized and called her Sarah Hope. Hope was a name of good augury. She quickly fitted herself to the ways of the house, never forgot anything, never shirked her work, and only had two outbreaks—but they were bad ones, and crockery flew about so freely that Aunt Hannah tied her hands behind her back and locked her up till Kenneth returned. Never in Sally's life had she known what it was to blush, but when he saw those discreditable bonds a flood of shame and contrition dyed her young cheeks. This was the last of her outbreaks. When the month was over she was sent to Nurse Brown and the nearest Board School. Every Sunday afternoon she went to Bedford Lodge; and soon Aunt Hannah owned that Sally was growing quite a decent-looking girl. She was indeed rapidly changing in everything but in what was unchangeable —her fidelity to Kenneth and her love for him.

Six months after Kenneth's memorable fight there was no little commotion in Cow Court one afternoon, for old Biddy announced her intention of "looking up that gal." Out of a dirty receptacle she produced Kenneth's card. It had changed to a dull yellow: for whenever the famous tale was told of how the "young swell licked Tim," the card was handed round to finish off the story. The call was to be made in style: so at three o'clock a costermonger's barrow with a donkey harnessed to it was drawn up at the entrance to the court; in the barrow was placed an upturned fruit-basket, and on to this Biddy was hoisted. The crutch went too, as a sign of her temporal power in Cow Court and to be handy to belabor the donkey with. According to the tradition of the Court, the best female head-gear was a shawl thrown over the head, and thus attired Biddy drove through the stately streets of the West. As the day wore on she maintained her seat on

the basket with increasing difficulty, for it became necessary for her to pause at sundry taverns to refresh herself, and when she reached Bedford Lodge her face was aflame. Many vagrants had stood at that door, but never a more disreputable figure than old Biddy. She did not limit herself in the matter of bell-pulling, and her peal rang through the house.

"Go away!" cried the maid, trying to shut the door. "It's like your imperence to come to the front door!"

"No, you don't!" chuckled Biddy, adroitly slipping in the end of her crutch. "I've come to see Mr. Kenneth Gordon; and I don't go till I've seen him, that's more." The housemaid was so astonished that her vigilance relaxed, and Biddy established herself on the mat inside. The maid called to the cook to keep watch, and ran to Aunt Hannah.

"A dreadful woman in the hall!" cried she. "I'll see to her!" And, like a hawk sweeping down on its quarry, she bore down on Biddy. "Be off at once!" she cried. "How dare you enter my house!"

"Stow your jaw!" said Biddy, unmoved; and then she produced Kenneth's card, and thrust it aggressively under Aunt Hannah's nose. "That's his card, ain't it? Well, I've come to see him and Sally, and don't budge till I do."

"What have you to do with Sarah? We don't want all the riff-raff of Cow Court here!"

"That's just what yer will have unless I sees her," replied Biddy; and then she seated herself on the hall chair, took out her pipe, and announced her determination to stay till Kenneth came.

To the great disgust of his aunts, Kenneth, when he returned, ushered Biddy into his study, and was closeted with her for half an hour. Biddy explained that as Tim was dead she considered herself Sally's guardian, and Cow Court entirely ratified this view. Before leaving, Biddy reminded Kenneth that there was an ancient and laudable custom of drinking one's host's health. Kenneth ransomed himself from this obligation by a cash payment of half a crown.

The aunts never knew what had taken place at this interview. He merely said that Biddy had something to tell him about Sally's early life.

"Nothing creditable, I'll warrant," said Hannah, and he made no reply.

CHAPTER V.

Seven years had rolled by. They had passed lightly over Kenneth, only changing the youth of twenty-two into the man of twenty-nine. They had brought a few more gray hairs to Aunt Mattie, a few more angularities to Aunt Hannah; but they had absolutely transformed Sally. During the first two years Kenneth had stayed at home, then he had accepted an appointment in Buenos Ayres, where he had to stay five years. When he left England Sally was a promising girl of fourteen, and he was easy about her future, for step by step she had won her way into the household, first gaining the hearts of the servants, then Aunt Mattie's, and then by slower degrees Aunt Hannah's. Sally as a child, girl and woman, was unchanged in one thing—the little wild heathen heart had gone out to Kenneth when he fought for her, and remained his always. Her love had grown with her growth—education and refinement were as sunshine and dew to it, fostering and feeding. At first it was arranged that she was to be trained for service, but her wonderful development altered their plans. Then she was to be apprenticed to some first-rate shop; and, lastly, trained as a teacher. So she was sent to Kensington High School, and spent her holidays at Bedford Lodge. She was gardening one June morning soon after Kenneth's departure, and Aunt Hannah watched the tall lithe figure moving about among the flowers.

"Who," she exclaimed, "would have believed that the dirty child Kenneth brought home that memorable evening would ever look like that?"

"She might be Flora amid her own flowers," said Mattie gently. The very sight of the girl seemed to bring gladness into the hearts of the two old spinsters. Aunt Hannah had softened wonderfully under Sally's pretty influences; and, as for Mattie, Sally was enshrined in her heart next to her own dear Kenneth.

"Sister," said Hannah abruptly, leaving the window, "we ought to think seriously about Sally. We love her dearly, but——"

"But what?" asked Mattie anxiously.

"But of course she comes out of the gutter. Our first duty is to Kenneth—we must let him run no risk."

"He has no thought of that; besides, he won't be back for five years."

"She must go to a good boarding-school and be trained as a governess. She is pretty now; what will she be when she has outgrown the awkward age?"

"But, Hannah, don't let us lose her altogether."

"Men always make fools of themselves over beauty, and always will." At this moment Sally came to the open window with two posies in her hand. Her cheeks were flushed with a tender, rosy glow, her eyes sparkled with happy life.

"This is for you," she cried, pinning the posy in Aunt Mattie's dress.

"Flowers are for the young, dear; the old never want them till the end comes." Nevertheless, Mattie tucked them in prettily and glanced at the mirror. Then Sally made a rush at Aunt Hannah, but was repulsed with:

"Be off with your tomfoolery, Sally! Put your flowers in water and go and practise." But Sally coaxed till she gained her point; and the servants stared to see Aunt Hannah's uncompromising left shoulder daintily adorned.

After lunch Mattie tried to look stern, though tears stood in her loving old eyes.

"Sarah, my dear," she said (Sally started at the unusual "Sarah"), "you are fourteen now, and we have determined to send you to a good boarding-school."

"What! leave you all?" cried Sally, turning pale.

"You will spend part of your holidays here, perhaps," said Aunt Hannah. "Remember, you have to earn your living. My nephew can't always keep you in idleness." Sally's dark eyes flashed, as she answered:

"He has done so much, you may trust me to do the rest. They said at school I had a fine voice. If I worked hard I might——"

"You'd have to toil for years to earn even your bread; but I'll see to it."

She did so, and speedily. The very next day Aunt Hannah walked Sally off to a professor to give his

opinion of her singing. Aunt Hannah sat upright, umbrella in hand.

"You will understand, professor, my opinion is there's been no real singing since Malibran died, and I'd have half your modern screeching women gagged. This girl thinks she has a voice, so let her sing to you and have done with it."

When Sally had finished one verse of a ballad Aunt Hannah ejaculated, "Goodness gracious, bless the girl!"

At the end of the second the professor said, "The voice is a real contralto of great beauty; but it needs training, and years of hard study."

"It shall have both," said Aunt Hannah.

* * * * * *

Five years afterward, when Kenneth returned from Buenos Ayres, Sally was still at school. Almost the first thing he said was:

"What have these years done for my little Sally?"

"That style of talk won't do," said Hannah. "When Sally scrubbed floors it didn't matter; she is a pretty young lady now, and things are different."

"There was nothing pretty about Sally when I left, but her eyes. I shall never forget how frightfully sharp her elbows were."

"She's the best and dearest and prettiest girl in the world," said Mattie.

"I hope she is unchanged in some things," said he.

If he could have looked into Sally's heart he would have seen one thing unchanged. It still seemed as right and natural to her to love Kenneth as to love God: both had been so good to her. Sometimes she recalled the dark vision of Cow Court, but even that caught a glory from the thought that there Kenneth first found her. There was one black memory connected with those days that nothing could brighten, but that she kept hidden in the depths of her heart.

"There's a letter from Sally," cried Kenneth one day at breakfast; and then he said, "She has had an offer of marriage. Her music-master has proposed to her—of course she has refused him."

"And why of course?" asked Aunt Hannah sharply.

"For the best of all reasons: she doesn't love him."

"Fiddlestick! The man's honest, I suppose, and can

give her a good home. She sprang from the gutter, and can't expect to pick and choose."

"She had better go back to the gutter than marry without love," answered Kenneth.

Sally wrote simply and straightforwardly. The trouble of it was that there had been so much talk that Miss Addison thought she must leave at once, and had (subject to Kenneth's approval) obtained for her the post of pupil-teacher in a school at Streatham. Then came a pretty little bit, in which Sally said she hoped she had acted in a way that Kenneth approved.

"She's a brick!" he said emphatically.

"She must come here for a week before going to Streatham," said Mattie.

CHAPTER VI.

Sally was to come at five. Kenneth wondered what she was like. He expected to find her neat, orderly, and well-mannered. At five he went into the drawing-room and waited. Five-fifteen and no Sally—five-thirty and she came. For a moment he stared at her in silence: the years had done so much. She stood with outstretched hand—her great soft eyes sought his. He noticed in a stupefied way that she moved with exquisite grace and lightness. He would have liked to kiss her, but that was clearly out of the question, so he warmly grasped her hand in both his.

"Why, Sally dear, my little girl grown into a tall young lady!"

Deep as any "inmost heart of rose" the young blood flushed into Sally's cheeks.

"Yes," she answered, "but still the same Sally." Her heart told her that never had she seen anything so goodly as this bright young Englishman, as he stood before her with gay glad eyes. Half-playfully, half-tenderly, he led her to a sofa, and said:

"Now, Sally, tell me everything."

"Where shall I begin?"

"From the moment I left England. When I left, you had high shoulders and wore short frocks, and called me 'sir.'"

"I must call you 'sir' still. But look at the dear old

room—it isn't a bit changed. I wonder who has dusted it since I've been away!" Then she went to seek the aunts.

"To think that she came out of Cow Court!" said Kenneth, watching her cross the hall, "and that weeds can grow into such sweet flowers! But I won't make a fool of myself."

"And now, Sally, sing to us," said Aunt Hannah after dinner.

This was the supreme moment Sally had looked forward to for years. She knew she had a superb voice—knew exactly what her powers were, and felt in full possession of them. When she sat down to the piano a soft flush came to her cheeks and a light to her eyes. She chose an old Scotch ballad—a simple, tender thing, that needed perfect style and expression. Kenneth started as her first notes fell on the air. Hers was one of those thrilling deep contraltos, soft as velvet, rich and rounded, with the strange power to stir and move that a good contralto has. The spell of her voice fell upon him, tears came to his eyes; he moved forward to see her sweet impassioned face as she sang; he saw her soul flashing in the sweet dewy eyes, and a great awe and love arose in his heart. The song ended in a deep solemn chord, like the echo of an amen.

Sally turned to Kenneth.

"Did you like it? I have labored so hard for your praise."

He did not speak at first, but when she raised her eyes to his she saw there a look so eager, so ardent and sweet, that she almost wished she had not spoken. He caught her hand in his.

"Am I pleased? Oh, my dear, surely you know; it is too beautiful for praise of mine."

Sally sang no more that night, but felt she was rewarded. That song had changed the world for Kenneth. Could a man's heart be sung out of him in such fashion? Were the days of magic still with us, and had this sweet witch of nineteen summers made him forget all prudence and wisdom?

Next morning he was full of content, bathed in the brightest mental sunshine; joy was in his heart, love

ruled his life. Sally was in the house. Sally was his —surely all his; had he not fought and conquered for her? He sang as he dressed, breaking off to laugh at the contrast of his rough baritone with Sally's velvet tones, and it was not till he saw his aunts—the very models of family propriety—that he realized the difficulties of his position.

But little sleep had come to Sally that night. Love has divine insight, and when their eyes met after her song she knew that he loved her. But he should never marry her. Her valiant heart screwed itself up to the sticking-point and settled that forever. The consciousness of his love came on her as a bitter, sweet surprise. When flushed with her song, she looked into his eyes and saw love there radiant and enthroned, her difficulties were at one stroke doubled. When her own heart was her only foe she had buckled on her armor and gone down into the fight; but now she had to face another foe, before whom she felt powerless. Flight was her only chance. At six she rose and packed; at seven she went to Aunt Hannah.

"I am going away," she said. "I ought never to have come." Aunt Hannah's honest eyes searched her face in silence. "I shall never come back; it is the only way. I thought I was strong, and I *was*, till he was weak."

Aunt Hannah took her in her arms, kissed her, and said, "I honor and respect you, Sally. I saw it all last night. You are a good woman."

"A grateful one, I hope. After all your and his kindness, can I let him run any risk?"

"But it is terrible for you, my child."

"I can bear my own grief. I have loved him for so long, my heart has got used to its ache. It is harder now, but still I can bear it."

At breakfast Aunt Hannah said Sally had slept ill and could eat no breakfast. All Kenneth's inquiries got nothing more out of her than that.

At twelve Sally went quietly out of the back door, her eyes full of tears, her heart like lead.

At lunch Aunt Hannah said, "Sally has gone, Kenneth—for your good as well as her own. She has saved us a terrible trouble by acting so nobly."

Then Kenneth lost his head; but Aunt Hannah presented a front of iron.

"It was the right thing to do, and so you will own in time. Be patient. My heart is sore for you both; but you are young, and life with its duties is before you. At any rate, don't let a girl of nineteen beat you in self-sacrifice."

But Kenneth flung family pride to the winds, and said, "You may say what you like; I'll marry her to-morrow if she'll have me.

After an hour's hot debate he agreed to wait a month.

CHAPTER VII.

Sally went to Miss Parker's school. She had to face all the drudgery of preparing the girls for their lessons, and taking them safely through the rudiments.

She knew what awaited her, and did not flinch. During the last five years she had learnt how to master her love, to use it as an incentive to hard work; but it was easier to fight the battle alone; to fight at all in Kenneth's presence was impossible. Day by day she plunged with feverish vigor into the work of teaching, plodding on with a pale face and heavy eyes through the long list of pupils. During the night watches she thought it was a hundred times better that she should suffer than he; better that the wrench should come now than that he should marry her, and his good name be clouded by her shameful story.

Time passed more quickly for Kenneth, for at the end of it shone hope. Sally had none.

When the month was over, Kenneth said, "To-day I am going to Sally."

"What! you will let the whim of a moment ruin your life?" said Hannah.

"If I followed your advice two lives would be ruined."

That very day he went to Streatham.

Sally's work had been harder than usual. The everlasting exercises, the never-ceasing scales, the persistently wrong notes, the enormous difficulties of teaching suburban young ladies without voice or ear to sing had worn her out.

Suddenly a pupil exclaimed, "Oh! there is such a

handsome young man coming up the drive." (Sally was unmoved; no young man was likely to call on her.) "He must have come to see Miss Davison. That's four cousins in three weeks!"

Sally looked up and saw Kenneth. Her heart seemed to rush into her mouth. She dismissed the girl, and steadied herself. A mirror was in front of her, and she saw her own face pale as death, with dark shadows round the eyes. She wore a dingy old black dress, but even that could not conceal the grace of the lovely young neck and the sweep of the beautiful shoulders. And now Kenneth entered, and when she saw his radiant face, full of strength and fervor, she felt that he looked years younger than she did. That sorrowful, girlish face, full of pathetic endurance, appealed to his heart irresistibly, and without a moment's thought he flung his arms round her and kissed her.

All Sally's nineteen years of life culminated in that first unwarrantable embrace. As her pretty, flushed face rested for a moment on his shoulder, her heart whispered, "Why not rest there forever?" Then she wrenched herself free, and her blush ebbed away, leaving her as pale as marble and as hard.

"You might, at least, have spared me this, and left me some self-respect," she said, looking like a young Joan of Arc. He ought to have been abashed and humbled, but he wasn't.

"Sally!" he whispered, so tenderly that she drew back again, mistrusting herself and him. "Sally, I love you—you know I do." Sally tried hard to keep back the flood of joy that welled up from her heart into her eyes.

"Do men in your rank of life act like that and speak afterward?" Looking down into the sweet depths of her eyes, he said:

"Oh, my love, you are wasting moments that might be so sweet. We love each——" Ere he could finish Sally flashed in:

"Who told you I loved you? Have I ever led you to think I loved you?" He gazed at her with such sweet manly assurance that she felt her anger melting away.

"Sally, my darling, I see it in your eyes—I hear it in your voice. Love has given me insight."

"Of course you know it." And her voice took those thrilling tones which had moved his heart so when she sang. "I dare say every one does. I have loved you for years, and shall love you always. I am not ashamed to own it. It has been the strength of my life. If you had never spoken I should have gone on loving you all the same, and gone down to my grave single for your sake; but oh, my love, I shall never wed you—never be with you."

Kenneth would once more have flung his arms around her, but she composed herself by a great effort, and said:

"Wait just a moment and I will tell you all."

"You told me all when you said you loved me."

"Not all. Let me speak once and forever. What I am you made me. All I have you gave me; and in return I mean to guard your good name—to guard it from yourself and from me." He interrupted her with an impatient gesture, but she persisted, "You know what I was when you found me. You think you know all, but no one ever told you that I had been in prison for theft—that I had my hair cut short—wore prison dress and ate prison food, and——" Her voice failed her—her face grew deadly white—her hungry eyes searched his face to see if he shrank from her. To her joy the brightness of his eyes never clouded for a moment. He took her hand with a sweet gesture of love and reverence, and holding it steadfastly between his own, he spoke:

"Dear, I know it—have known it for years. Biddy came and told me long ago; and knowing all, I still ask you to be my wife."

Sally's blood slowly came back to her pale cheeks, slowly flooded her fair face with its tender rose, slowly the sweet light mingled with the tears in her eyes and conquered them. It was so doubly sweet that he should know all and yet love on. Her joy at first was too great for words. She moved a little closer to him, then with swift, sweet abandonment she flung her arms round his neck and drew his face down to hers.

"But, dear," she whispered, "the world will know." As their lips met he answered:

"You are all the world to me."

The story of a French duel which was no joke, told by Jules Lermina in the San Francisco *Sunday Call.*

A DUEL.

"THERE are no real duels nowadays," said one of our party. "A scratch, three drops of blood, and the antagonists go off to breakfast together!"

"Besides," said another, "it is always so arranged that no one shall be killed. The seconds throw up the swords and prevent fatal thrusts, or if pistols are used, load them with cork balls."

"The duel, as it is practised at present, is a joke."

"Say a caricature."

Dr. Gabriel, who had listened until then without taking part in the conversation, which astonished nobody, for he was not talkative, raised his head and murmured:

"Do you think so?"

"For my part," resumed the first speaker, "I have several times served as a second—to tell the truth, have been an accomplice in more than one pleasantry."

"The same way here," said the other, "and really I don't complain, for I confess I should have been greatly embarrassed had a corpse remained on my hands. A body doesn't disappear; the authorities invariably find it."

Again the doctor said:

"Do you think so?"

"Do you deny, doctor, that it is impossible to withdraw a corpse from the attention of the police? They know at once if a man disappears, especially if he occupies a position in society. There is always some one to give notice of his absence. Now, if you refer to some vagabond, without friends, family, or residence, the case is different."

"I tell you," said the doctor, this time very emphatically, "that there are exceedingly serious duels, that a man may be killed, and that, further, though belonging to an excellent family, having friends, even being hand

in glove with magistrates, he may disappear forever without any one knowing what has become of him."

"But the corpse is somewhere!"

"Of course."

The doctor passed his hand across his forehead.

He looked very calm and a trifle pale, and did not seem to notice the slightly ironical smile which had settled on every face.

"Well," said he, "how long ago was it? I don't remember exactly, but it was a long, long while, say twenty-five or thirty years. Where did it take place? Among the savages of Nyanza, among the redskins of North Amercia? No; in France. But I shall keep from you the name of the little town. Search the map of France—the little town is very near a medical college. It is surrounded by important villages, one of which bears the name of a battle, a sadly celebrated battle.

"In the little town in question, two students of the same age and brothers through friendship were toiling assiduously, impatient to win the title of doctor, which, surrounded by the halo of distance, seemed to them a sure guarantee of rapid fortune.

"There was, besides, within them a more honorable desire than that of creating for themselves a lucrative practice. They were laborious enthusiasts who aspired to discoveries, and made intelligent researches that they might conquer some of the diseases which overwhelm humanity. But they were not rivals or jealous of each other. On the contrary, they mingled their intelligence, energy, and hopes, and each was ready to share with the other the glory he counted upon acquiring.

"They were, as you see, two children.

"The last year of their studies was drawing to its close; their examinations had been brilliant, and but a slight effort would enable them to reach the goal; that is to say, the conquest of the diploma which would permit them to work without incumbrance, in spite of routine professors, who, for the most part, are adversaries.

"I repeat to you they were friends.

"How happened it that in a day that friendship was

transformed into hate? How, allies the night before, did they become implacable enemies? A profound moralist has said: 'Look for the woman!'

"This time, as usual, you would have found her.

"Who was she? Was she worth the furious rivalry for her which had separated these two brothers? No matter! A woman, for those who love her, is always the most important of her sex.

"And both loved her to the point of madness.

"In fact, they were mad, for only madmen could have——"

The doctor broke off for a moment and drank a mouthful of wine. His voice had grown singularly shaky, but it was firmer when he resumed.

"A furious hatred took the place of their friendship, but, by a sort of tacit understanding, they resolutely hid it from every eye. As in the past, they were seen together; together they shut themselves up in laboratory; together they attended the clinic.

"One day they addressed themselves to four of their comrades, students like themselves, and explained this to them: they hated each other mortally; no one was to know the cause of this antipathy which was rooted in them like incurable lunacy; one of them was superfluous upon this earth; they had resolved to fight each other to the death.

"Don't imagine that the four students raised any objection. For a very long while, the romantic, driven from Paris by scepticism, had found refuge in the provinces. The people there still believed in the heroes of George Sand, the truculence of Gautier, and the Treize of Balzac. A duel to the death. It was a rare windfall!

"Nevertheless, among these hare-brained fellows, one, more thoughtful or more selfish than the rest, observed that the seconds in such a grave duel might get into serious trouble. Just at that period it seemed that the authorities were inclined to deal severely with duellists, the fit seizing upon them intermittently, as you are aware.

"Fearing such objections on the part of the seconds, our two duellists had provided for them; they would fight in a spot calculated to bid defiance to all curiosity,

and in which, besides, the corpse—they did not doubt that there would be a corpse—would disappear without arousing the attention of the authorities.

"This is the way in which the affair took place:

"Toward two o'clock one summer morning the six young men quitted the little town without their departure being noticed by any one. The seconds, wrapped in cloaks, concealed something, and that something was not swords.

"They took out-of-the-way roads, in which they were sure of meeting no one, and thus reached the small village of Blanc.

"They found themselves at the foot of the wall of a cemetery. All the party were agile, as well as young. The scaling of the wall, therefore, presented no difficulty. They gained the interior of the cemetery.

"The spectacle was, indeed, romantic. Amid the first glimmers of day the white tombs emerged from the morning mist like spectres with arms outstretched beneath their winding-sheets; the wooden crosses made black stains.

"They chose a spot where no burial had certainly taken place for a very long while—this was easily divined by the topography of the alleys already traced. And when they had fixed upon the point, the four seconds, producing from under their cloaks the spades they had kept concealed there, began to dig a grave.

"They had strong arms; they were sons of peasants and knew how to handle their implements. After twenty minutes' toil the grave was dug—two metres long and one wide.

"'Is it all right?' demanded one of the seconds.

"The two adversaries, who, until then, had been walking among the tombs, taking great care not to meet each other, approached and made an affirmative answer.

"'You are still resolved to fight?'

"'Yes!'

"'Until one of you meets his death?'

"'Yes!'

"There was no other attempt at a reconciliation.

"Each of the two enemies handed the seconds a letter which was not to be opened until after the death of one of them. The seconds took charge of them.

"The two men then stripped to the waist; they did not want any blood-stained garments to remain. Then each one was given a knife.

"They sprang into the yawning grave.

"How they threw themselves upon each other, how they closed, how, maddened, blinded by rage, they struck, no one knew; in their fit of furious madness they did not know themselves.

"Suddenly one of them said, in a faint voice:

"'He is dead!'

"He—was the other!

"The seconds, stupefied with horror, but restrained by their pride—at that period people affected impassibility—were scarcely able, so much did they tremble, to help him out of the grave.

"He was the victor, he was alive; the other was lying in a heap amid a pool of blood.

"But it was imperative that he should disappear. One of the students established that he was dead. Then they filled up the grave, trod down the earth, and replaced the sods which had been carefully removed.

"After this they returned to the town.

"The following day the parents of the dead man received a letter in which he announced to them that, having for a long time had the desire to see foreign lands, he had departed for the nearest port and embarked for a destination he would make known to them only after his arrival.

"The promised communication never arrived.

"The man had disappeared and it was never known what had become of him."

The auditors of this singular story had grown pale.

"But the other?" cried some one.

"The other, the living man," said the doctor, in a solemn voice, "was myself!"

"And the woman?"

"She was a wretch! I never saw her afterward."

There have been many stories told about the battle of Waterloo, but this one describes a deed which, for impudent nerve, has never been surpassed.

A STORY OF WATERLOO.

THE only prisoner made by the English reserves at Waterloo was a French general, whose capture was due to the cool head and stout heart of a young brigade major anxious for adventure. During the battle several regiments of cavalry and infantry were kept in reserve, under a heavy fire from the French guns. Great was the havoc, and neither men nor horses relished the passive attitude to which they were condemned. While a group of young officers, in front of the left wing of the reserve, were discussing the situation, their attention was attracted to a French general and his staff, all on horseback, who were looking through their glasses at the Englishmen. One of the group was Captain Halkett, a young brigade major, mounted on a thoroughbred. Suddenly he exclaimed: "I'll lay any one £5 that I will bring that French general over here, dead or alive. Who'll take my bet?" "Done! done! done!" shouted several officers.

The captain examined the saddle-girths and his pistols. Then shouting "Good-by!" and putting spurs to his horse, he dashed at a furious pace across the plain between the British and French lines. His comrades followed him with their glasses, not speaking a word. The Frenchmen opposite seemed puzzled. Believing that the Englishman's horse had bolted and that the rider had lost control of him, they opened their ranks to let the runaway through. Halkett steered his steed so as to graze the mounted general on the right side. At that instant he put his arms around the Frenchman's waist and lifted him bodily out of the saddle, and, throwing him over his own horse's neck, turned sharp by and made for the English lines. When the general's staff realized the meaning of the bold rider they dashed after him; but he had a good start,

and not a Frenchman dared to fire for fear of hitting the general.

Half a squad of English dragoons, seeing Halkett chased by a dozen French officers, charged them. They opened their ranks to let Halkett through, closed them up again the moment he was in the rear, and then forced the Frenchmen to turn swiftly and seek shelter under their own guns. Amid the maddest cheering Halkett stopped in front of the British lines, with the general half-dead but securely clasped in his strong arms. He jumped from his horse, apologized to his prisoner for the unceremonious way in which he had been handled, and in reply to the congratulations of his comrades, said simply: "Praise my horse; not me."

This man owed his life to the energy of his lawyer, to the love that some men have for money, and to the love that other men have for woman. It was a grim race against time with the gallows for a goal. The story was written by Lew Vanderpoole for the St. Louis *Republic*.

THE REPRIEVE.

FOR twenty years Hamilton Duke was my client. In fact, it was to him that I owed not only a competent fortune, but my position in society.

But for this I should never have undertaken his defence in this last case, my best feelings were so against him—not that I was an ingrate, but because I believed that he had murdered his wife.

Many things compelled my drawing such a conclusion.

He was well-bred, refined and cultured, and of a lofty nature, while she was of common stock, the personification of ignorance and low-breeding. For ten years he was all chivalry and tenderness, while she was always sullen, morose, dissatisfied.

It was claimed by their closest friends that he loved her the first few years of their united life, though I never believed this—it was such a manifest impossibility.

At any rate, he hated her cordially when her life came to its tragic close, and he had done so for a considerable time prior to that event.

Being entirely in his confidence, he often came to my office, pallid and trembling, to tell me of some new vulgar violence of hers which had driven him nearly to the last extremity of desperation.

And so, one morning, when Mrs. Duke was found dead with an ugly stab through her heart, her husband standing over her with a reeking knife in hand, I naturally believed that he had killed her.

Later on, when I saw him, my suspicions seemed confirmed.

He was in a state of wild excitement when I entered the sheriff's office, in answer to his summons.

Until that moment no one had succeeded in getting a word out of him about the murder.

"What does it all mean?" I asked, when we were alone.

"I don't know," he gasped. "I don't know whether it was I who killed her or not. But I don't want to die. I mustn't be allowed to die. You must defend me—you must save me."

Though I pitied him, I believed him guilty; and though I defended him, I felt that he merited death.

But my efforts were vain ones. The evidence against him was too strong.

An unusual noise in Mrs. Duke's room had attracted the butler's attention the morning of the murder. On entering, he saw Mr. Duke raising himself up, knife in hand, from the prostrate body of his wife, as if he had just stabbed her.

That and the fact that the Dukes had indulged in many bitter quarrels of late was enough to win a disastrous verdict from any jury.

Mr. Duke was found guilty and sentenced to death. He was to be hanged in forty-five days.

Reopening a case at that time was not the easy thing it is now, and I found it impossible to get him a new trial.

On and on those grace days swept, seemingly with lightning swiftness, until the time set for the execution was but fifty hours off.

I was desperate; Duke was frantic.

"You must go to the governor," he cried at length. "You must get a pardon for me."

"Impossible," I answered. "There isn't enough time."

"Yes, there is. This is Wednesday morning, and I am not to hang until Friday noon. The train goes in an hour. If you leave here at once, you can make the trip and get back here in time."

"But on what pretext? Simply seeing the governor will do no good. I——"

"You must think of a pretext on the way. Don't stay here and talk. You are wasting time, and my life must be saved. *Do* go at once."

He was in such a wrought-up state that there was no

use arguing with him, and so I went away, walking about the streets in sheer bewilderment.

By blind chance I went to the railway station, arriving just as the train rolled in. Dejected and reckless, scarcely knowing what I was about, I clambered on board at the last moment, and went whirling away toward the governor's, bent on a wild, mad purpose, which I well knew could only prove entirely fruitless.

When the station next to my destination was reached, a woman came on board, who instantly pounced on me and kissed me.

It was my niece.

"What under the sun is the matter with you?" she demanded.

When I told her of poor Duke's predicament her face became very grave, but the moment she discovered my business with the governor it brightened.

"How very fortunate!" she exclaimed, clapping her hands gleefully.

"What?" I demanded, nearly stupefied with amazement.

"Leave it all to me," she said, "and I will save your friend. No—I'm not crazy. Listen: Last night the governor proposed to me. Of course I love him dearly, but I don't want to be too cheaply won, and so I refused to give him an answer. He dines with us tonight. After dinner, when his stomach is full and his heart easy to get at, I'll promise to marry him on the condition that he pardons poor old Duke."

Then and there, on a public train though we were, I both hugged and kissed her.

She was as good as her word, and six hours later I was on board another train, homeward bound, and in my pocket was a reprieve for Duke—the case against him being so strong that the governor deemed a full pardon impolitic then.

The reprieve granted him another three months, though, and by that time popular sentiment was likely to cool down sufficiently to make a pardon feasible.

On the way home I was fairly happy, and tried to picture to myself Duke's face when he knew he was safe.

This made me so comfortable that I fell asleep.

Nothing disturbed my slumbers until the trainmen called out the name of the junction where I had to change cars for the branch road which ran through my town.

And there, to my consternation, I found myself unable to move. Mentally I was awake. Physically I was asleep. I was fully conscious of the stir and bustle made by those who were getting on and off the train; but I could not move a muscle.

With all my might I endeavored to throw off the trance-like spell which held me, but all to no purpose. The train moved on and took me with it.

Cold perspiration oozed out through every pore, and I think I should have gone mad then and there had not utter unconsciousness mercifully come to my rescue.

It was more than an hour before I regained possession of my senses.

By that time it was impossible to get back to the junction in time to catch the home-bound train on the branch line.

Springing up the moment I was conscious, I explained things to the conductor, offering him any price he chose to demand if he would run his train back to the junction and take me home.

That was out of the question. He could only do such a thing on the order of the general superintendent, and that personage could not be reached, because a storm the day before had blown so many wires down that all telegraphic communication was cut off.

All I could do, then, was to remain on board the train seven hours more, when by tramping twelve or fifteen miles over a craggy, roadless mountain, I could *probably* get home by noon.

Though the "probably" discouraged me, I thanked the conductor for his advice, shut my teeth hard on my misery, and tried to make the best of it.

That was the longest night of my life. It seemed to me that it would never end.

Day was just breaking when we reached the station where I was to leave the train and begin my foot journey over the mountain.

Hard as was the ascent of that trackless, precipitous mountain-side, it was a vast improvement on the train.

I was in motion myself now—doing something, whether it would avail me anything or not.

Soon the sun was up. Altogether too soon it had accomplished half its journey from horizon to zenith.

It was then that I reached the mountain-top, with a good seven miles of rough walking still before me.

Duke was to be hanged at noon, unless I was on time.

At ten o'clock I was but two miles away from him; and with all of the horrors of my journey presumably behind me, I smiled at the thought of how easy the rest would be, and how I should disappoint those who were even then gathering to see my client hanged.

A vine caught my foot and threw me. Falling, I sprained my ankle, and the pain was so intense that I had to exert every atom of my will to keep from going into a dead faint.

Breaking a forked stick from a sapling, I extemporized it into a crutch, and hobbled off as best I could.

At the end of an hour I had made but half a mile, and was so exhausted that I knew another fifteen minutes would bring my locomotive powers to a full stop.

Poor old Duke must die, after all. There was no help for it, and with an outcry of utter despair I settled on the ground in a heap.

The mental anguish I suffered in the half-hour which followed was enough to unseat a man's reason.

Watch in hand, I counted the fleeting seconds.

In twenty-five minutes more my client would hang, for want of the reprieve in my pocket.

And then, joyful sound, I heard approaching feet!

A moment later a negro appeared. He was old, dirty, and stupid—entirely unable to understand me until I mentioned money. When I said: "I will give you $100 if you get this paper into the hands of the sheriff before twelve o'clock," with a yell like a fiend he snatched the reprieve out of my hand and darted away.

Again I sought my watch.

My messenger had twenty-two minutes in which to cover a mile and a half, a portion of his route being through thick underbrush. It was doubtful if he would make it.

The hour which passed before he returned with help seemed a hundred years to me.

"I done got dar," he gasped, nearly out of breath; "an' de gemman am all safe."

Probably it was unmanly, but I wept for joy.

They tried to make a hero of me for that exploit, but I am too commonplace and stolid for that. I had simply done my duty. I had saved my client. That was all.

However, I was rewarded more gloriously yet.

Before Duke's reprieve expired his butler was taken seriously ill. Just before he died he made a startling confession.

It was he who killed Mrs. Duke.

She caught him in the act of stealing her jewels and he killed her to escape punishment. Returning a moment later, to make sure that his victim was dead, he saw Duke beside the dead woman with the bloody knife, and so made capital out of this circumstance by swearing away his employer's life to save his own.

She wore shabby clothes, scorned the rules of grammar and pronunciation, and travelled with "a show," but she knew what gratitude meant, and her character, as depicted in *All the Year Round*, was of heroic mould.

DOYNES'S WONDERFUL DOGS.

"YES, it was a plucky thing, certainly; but I can't help thinking that the motive was not altogether an unmixed one. You see, Westminster Bridge is one of the best-known places in the world; and when a man jumps over its parapet to save a fellow-creature who is struggling in the tideway below, he is tolerably certain to be well repaid for his exertion. His bravery is lauded in the next morning's papers; and he is often handsomely rewarded besides. There are thousands of good swimmers in London who would avail themselves of a similar opportunity. You'd do it yourself."

"H'm, well, perhaps I should. But you are taking rather a cold-blooded view of the matter. There is some risk."

"Of course there is risk," replied Dr. Wane, rather contemptuously. "There is the chance of cramp, the chance of a bad cold. There was a possibility of the train which brought you down here leaving the track and crashing over an embankment; but that doesn't make a hero of you for coming to see me."

"What are you driving at?"

"Simply this. That there is a great deal of rubbish talked about men making heroes of themselves, when they are merely encountering a certain degree of peril for their own self-advancement. Now, in my idea, that kind of selfishness can never be linked to true heroism. For instance, I can see nothing heroic about a jump from the clouds beneath a parachute, when the only incentive is money."

"I am afraid you will nearly always find a sordid motive of that kind at the bottom if you only probe deep enough."

"Generally, I grant you. But there are instances to the contrary. A village doctor does not often see much beyond the general routine; but I give you my

word for it, I did once come across a real heroine. Now what do you say to an hour's smoking?"

And Dr. Wane lit his pipe, and appeared anxious to change the subject.

"Tell me about your heroine first. Did she pull some one out of the river here, and then run away without leaving her name?"

"Nothing so dramatic. I don't think the story would interest you. Pass the matches."

But my curiosity was aroused, and after a little pressing he consented to tell it me.

"Your train arrived," he said, "just after the curtain had dropped, and the heroine of the piece had gone off to take up an engagement on another stage. Did you happen to see a caravan, a dingy, yellow-painted house on wheels, as you walked here from the station? It was in a field on your right hand."

"I can't say that I did."

"Very likely not. It would scarcely catch your eye unless you had looked for it. Yet it lay there all the same, an aged-looking concern, with 'Doynes's Wonderful Dogs' painted on the outside. It is one of the regular sort that go round to the fairs and feasts in this neighborhood, only perhaps a trifle inferior to most of them. It was here about the middle of the summer, when first I came to this place; and out of curiosity I went to see it among the others. There were just about half a dozen dogs—mangy mongrels all, with the exception of a gray-muzzled collie—and they were put through their paces by a girl who seemed to run the show entirely by herself. She was my heroine."

Wane put his pipe into his mouth here, and struck a match, as if to signify that was all, but an expectant "Yes" from his auditor hinted to him to proceed.

"Well," he said, "I noticed in May that she was looking badly used up—half-starved, in fact; which wasn't to be wondered at, as there were not more than half a dozen others besides myself in the tent, and we only paid a penny apiece for the performance. But a week ago, when the caravan passed through here en route for somewhere else, she broke down entirely, and that was when I first found out all about her. She is twenty-three now, it seems—twenty-three last week;

and just ten years ago her step-mother turned her out of doors. Poor child, she had had a hard life of it. She lost her own mother when she was two, and her father married again. Then he died, and the wife married a collier, who had a family of his own. Both of them ill-treated her, and finally, as I have said, turned her out of doors. She didn't know where to go to; she hadn't a friend in the world, poor little mite, or a relation either, that she knew of, for the matter of that; and so she wandered out of the place, and sat down and shivered on the river bank. Never before had she been outside the town of her birth. It was night, and raining, and the passers-by, of whom there were few, never noticed her. Not that she minded much; she was too numbed with misery for that—cold, hungry, wretched, and dulled with despair.

"Presently a dog came and sniffed at her. Good sort of creatures, dogs, aren't they?—especially stray ones. You always see them making up to people who are in trouble. Well, she patted the beast, and when its owner came by, he saw the two of them together.

"'Ello,' said he—he was Doynes, by the way—'what're you a-doin' 'ere? G'long 'ome wi' yer.'

"'Ain't got no 'ome.'

"'Ow's that?'

"'Mother's turned me out.'

"Now I don't know whether Doynes was moved by the idea that this was a good opportunity to pick up a much-desired assistant cheap, or by the child's evident misery. I should imagine the former. But anyway he asked:

"'Will yer come along wi' me?'

"On being answered 'Yes,' he stowed Liz inside his conveyance, fed her, gave her a shake-down on the floor, and then drove on. And that was how Liz became enrolled among the staff of the performing dogs.

"He was a happy-go-lucky sort of chap, this Doynes, never troubling himself particularly about anything, whether it was business or pleasure, religion or honesty. He drank when he felt inclined, sometimes in moderation, sometimes in excess; and ate when he was hungry. He was not intellectual-looking, by any means, but he was rather clever with dogs, and knew a good

deal about their value and capabilities. As a matter of fact, Doynes was not his name at all, but it was the only one by which he was known. He bought it when he bought the show from the original Doynes, who, by strict attention to business, had raised himself to the dizzy eminence of the third-rate music hall stage—and a professorship—and his own name sank gracefully among the mists of the past. Liz, too, assimilated the surname of Doynes. At first she was simply known as 'Doynes's Liz,' but of later years she became Liz Doynes; and her real name is not even a matter of history now.

"Accustomed, as she had been, to ceaseless labor and thankless toil, the child found her new life in the caravan one of comparative ease and enjoyment. She had merely to look after the horse and the dogs, to do the cooking and the washing, to keep the caravan something like tidy, and to take off Doynes's boots when he was too drunk to perform that office for himself; and when these duties had been attended to she was quite at liberty to amuse herself in any way she saw fit. Doynes never meddled with her, except to bestow an occasional cuff if the dogs didn't perform well, or a similar forcible reminder if the tripe supper wasn't cooked to his taste. But, on the other hand, he never gave her a sixpence to spend. Twice a year he presented her with a cheap new frock and bonnet, and at erratic intervals he would produce undergarments, culled, like blackberries, from some convenient hedge. And she usually had shoes or boots—of a kind.

"So that, on the whole, Liz—whose standard was not a high one—found her new life nearly all that she could wish for or expect. She usually had plenty to eat, and that was to her the principal blessing of life. She had a cozy bunk and an old horse-cloth by way of coverlet; and although Doynes's night quarters were merely separated off by a very sketchy curtain, this would have satisfied her most fantastic scruples of decency if they had ever arisen—which they never did. Of variety, she had a never-ending supply. Show folks are very clannish, and so she possessed heaps of acquaintances; and there were always the dogs—and Doynes.

"In summer things were pretty prosperous, for the dogs 'took' well, and their keep was not costly; besides this, Doynes was such a skilful forager that he usually managed to get poultry and vegetables for absolutely nothing. But as the saloons captured most of his hard cash in the prosperous season—for Doynes was a convivial soul, and adored beer—they were generally hard put to it in winter to make both ends meet. They lived in the caravan then just the same, only they kept it stationary, and hired the horse out to any one who would take him; and when they got very hard up—not before, though, for he objected to toil—Doynes would contrive to get hold of an odd job. And so things were kept going; somewhat erratically, it is true; but a stoppage was always prevented.

"When Liz had been at this game a couple of years, Doynes, acting on a happy inspiration which grew from the hint of one of his cronies, invested in a second-hand pair of tights and a spangled tunic, from a travelling circus proprietor, and, henceforward, Liz put the dogs through their paces herself. The girl was good-looking in a way. She had a wild, fierce sort of beauty, which seems to grow with this kind of life—strong black hair, you know, and fine dark violet eyes, and good figure—and she drew larger houses than Doynes had done. And that is not to be wondered at, seeing that he is a heavy-looking brute, rather of the jail-bird type. She liked the job; Doynes fully appreciated a change which gave him more money and less to do; the dogs preferred Liz's gentle tact to Doynes's rougher method; and so the arrangement suited all parties. But still Liz's pecuniary circumstances remained unaltered. There was no particular secret made of this. Doynes openly boasted that he was a gentleman now, for he got all his work done for nothing; and no one ever suggested that Liz had any money. And although she may at times have felt the need of it, she never struck for a regular salary.

"She might easily have done so, had she wished, for outside offers were not wanting. One of the young women from 'Cole's Imperial Shooting Gallery' had eloped with a rich fellow, and Liz was asked to take the vacant tube for her board, keep, and eight shillings

per week. The proprietor and acting manager of 'Fitzgerald's Theatre of Varieties' said he'd give her a two-per-cent share of the profits if she'd play boys' parts for him; and the owner of a 'Saccharine Refreshment Caravan' offered her a copartnership and a loving heart if she'd join him. But no, unaccountable as it may seem, Liz laughed and said she'd stick to Doynes's; and to Doynes's she stuck.

"'Liz is a rum un,' Doynes's friends would say to him; but Doynes would only chuckle and wink, and remark that he'd have 'another pot o' the same.' And so things went on, Liz doing, by very visible gradations, more and more, and Doynes less and less, till at last he was never near the show at all, except when it was on the move, and then he lay indolently in his bunk.

"Liz's friends among the show folks used to comment on these habits of Doynes's pretty freely and pointedly; but Liz would always laugh in a cheerful sort of way, and say, 'Oh, never mind the lad; 'e's allus fearful dry, an' likes ter sleck hissen.' ('Sleck' in her dialect meant moisten.) But, all the same, she gave him good, sharp lectures on the quiet, and he would swear, by all his dogs, by his caravan, by his eyes, by everything he held sacred, in fact, that he'd not touch a drop of liquor for a month. And then when the tent was pitched once more, he would slip off with a jolly laugh, and not put in an appearance again till 'turning-out time.' And Liz, quite unconcernedly, would shift the platform across to the entrance-end of the tent, so that she could guard the door after the money was taken, and put the dogs through their paces at the same time.

"But at last a climax came.

"They were at a village feast, and she had squared up for the night and was patiently waiting for Doynes's return. The day had been a hot one, and as he had plenty of money in his pocket she philosophically expected him to come back drunk. But half-past eleven and twelve struck by the church clock, and no Doynes came. She began to get anxious. He usually contrived to bring himself or be brought to the caravan before this. Half-past twelve! He must be back directly now. One! He has gone to sleep somewhere. One-

thirty! She put a shawl over her head, and opened the door with the intention of going to look for him. By the pale moonlight, which illuminated the paper-strewn ground and the scattered encampment, she saw half a dozen men carrying something on a sheep hurdle. Close to her was a messenger, in whom she recognized Signor Roberto Valtolski, of the 'Royal Marionette Theatre,' commonly known as Dolly Bobs.

"'Is he very bad, Dolly?' she asked anxiously, for experience had taught her that an ordinary 'drunk' took only a couple of bearers, or three at the outside.

"'Ay, lass, an' 'e's bad 'urt. Jabez 'Olroyd's cart 'as run ower 'im. They fotched t' docter, but 'e sez 'e cannot do aught for 'im. I'm right grieved for thee, lass. 'Appen tha'd best go sleep along wi' my missis, an' to leave me to stay along o' 'im?'

"Here the bearers brought the impromptu ambulance to the door, and the sympathetic moonlight showed Doynes's ghastly paleness.

"'No, 'e ain't dead, Liz,' answered Dolly Bobs in response to her inquiry, 'an' mebbe 'e won't die ef 'e's properly tended on, docter says. Get thee gone to my ole woman, an' we'll tak' 'im in!'

"But Liz refused. 'Lift him up,' she said, 'an' then go, please. 'E's used ter me, is Doynes. I'll sit up an' watch.' And she insisted, and they obeyed.

"In the morning a new trial awaited her. A great country boor knocked at the door, and she answered it. He, too, had been enjoying himself over-night, and he wasn't sober even then.

"'A've comed fer thee,' he remarked with a malty leer.

"Liz naturally did not understand, and so the brute explained that Doynes had sold her to him the night before for twelve shillings and a bottle of whiskey.

"'But I'm not his to sell,' replied Liz, as quietly as she could. 'Besides, he was drunk, and got a'most killed last night.'

"'I care note fer that,' exclaimed this interesting person, with a good deal of bad language levelled at the head of the injured Doynes; 'I wants thee; an' as I've paid fer thee, I'm bound ter 'ave tha'.' And he tried to clutch her wrist.

"'Listen,' said Liz. And those black eyes of hers

shone so fiercely that the fellow took a step or two backward involuntarily. 'You see all these people about?'—waving her hand toward the show folk who were packing up—'they're all my friends. If I calls 'em and tells 'em what you're wantin' they'll kick t' life out on yer. And that's a true. But I don't want 'em to know as 'e'—with a backward nod of her dish-evelled head, to indicate the invisible Doynes—'ad anythink to do wi' this yer; an' so I'll stan' to a quid if you'll clear out quiet.'

"'Hand out,' said the would-be husband, laconically, and as Liz had luckily got the receipts of the last night's performances still by her, she did so, and got rid of the difficulty. Then she fed the dogs, who were calling noisily for their breakfasts, and putting on her hat hastened off to the doctor's.

"'I want you to tell me square-out what's the matter with Doynes,' she said.

"Thinking it would be a kindness not to mince matters at all, the doctor told her that he was completely paralyzed in the lower limbs, and would always remain so; that with careful nursing he might live for years, but that nothing could ever make him walk again.

"'Had he any relations?'

"'No.'

"'Or friends who would take him?'

"'No; he's nobody but me.'

"'Oh, you are his—er—er—daughter?'

"'No.'

"'Ah! beg pardon—wife?'

"'No.'

"'Humph! Sister then, and——'

"'No, not even sister,' said Liz, with slight confusion. 'There's nothin' atwixt us at all. We'se just—frens.'

"'Then, my good girl, you had better send him to the workhouse.'

"'No, I'm blessed if I do,' said Liz, and she bounced out of the room and slammed the door behind her.

"Well, there was a nice kick-up among the show folks when it was announced that Liz was going to keep the helpless Doynes with her, and not pack him off, as prudence dictated, to the tender care of the poor-house. Mrs. Dolly Bobs, who slept and lived in the

same small compartment with two grown-up sons and a daughter, besides her husband, said 'it wasn't decent;' the landlord of the inn, who had fingered much of Doynes's money, and so spoke as an old friend, perhaps, really thought 'the poor'ouse was good enough for the likes o' it'—meaning Doynes—and said so to every one who was curious on the point; and the parson, too, a pasty-faced young fool, came and exhorted her to the same effect; but Liz was losing patience, and was distinctly rude to him.

"She stayed at the place where the accident had happened for a little over a fortnight, and tended Doynes with the most delicate care, although, when speech returned, his groans of self-pity would have driven any one else distracted; and as by that time she had sold everything that would sell, except the dogs—the exchequer was empty to start with—she harnessed the old horse in the shafts, and started off to the nearest fair, which was luckily not many miles away. Thanks to Doynes's previous laziness, she was quite capable of doing everything by herself, and she declared to me that this new era of her life was not an atom harder than the one which went before. In fact, she said it was easier, because the knowledge that Doynes wanted little comforts made the getting of them seem lighter.

"'O' course,' she told me, with a mischievous flash of those black eyes of hers, 'o' course, vittles is dearer now, 'cause I ain't s' 'andy at pickin' up things as 'e was; but then, when we gets 'em my way we ken eat 'em when we likes, an' don't 'ave to bolt 'em in a hurry. Lord! I mind 'im an' me an' the dogs wolfin' a goose in ten minutes once; an' none too soon neither, fer they come to look fer it whiles we was a-pickin' our teeths!'

"Winters were the hardest times; the first one especially. It was difficult to lay by any money for the hard season, and more difficult still to earn any in it. Liz would sometimes get an odd sixpence or perhaps a shilling by doing a bit of washing or baking, but these windfalls were precarious. Dwellers in cities don't like Ishmaelites, and all respectable people fight shy of a young woman that lives with a man who is no relative.

"But, as Liz said, in her bright, cheery way, 'We

allus worried through some'ow; an' if Doynes didn't get 'is port, 'e never went wi'out a sup o' beer.'

"She starved herself to let Doynes have luxuries.

"And so things went on till last winter, which, as you know, was an exceptionally hard one; and then troubles came down upon them thick and fast. The horse—a sorry beast—died, and with him passed away a steady source of income; the clever collie—not the one which found her originally, but his successor—was poisoned; and he was the best dog of the troupe; the caravan—which was very old and rotten—began to leak badly all over, and they could not afford to get it satisfactorily repaired, though Liz did all she could with painted canvas and tin tacks; Doynes got very feeble and sickly, and required constant nourishment and attention; there was a 'strike' in the neighborhood, and, consequently, no work to be obtained; and, finally, Liz herself contracted a cough which racked her continually, and made her, as she expressed it, 'as fond, an' feeble, an' doddery as a new-born pup.'

"It was a terrible struggle that winter; and when spring came, Liz carried the marks of it clearly. Her black eyes were more brilliant than ever, and her once healthy brown cheeks were now sunken, and reddened with a dangerous hectic flush. She hired a horse for the road—a piebald beast belonging to 'Van Davey's American Cirque,' which necessitated her always following in the wake of that equestrian exhibition, and made a large hole in her own receipts.

"'But,' she said, with a feeble attempt at the old cheerfulness, 'luck was down. The tent was dirty an' patched, an' my props was very much the same, an' though I might bawl mysel' 'oarse outside, an' say as Doynes's wonderful dogs was wonderfuller nor ever, most people 'ud take me at my word, an' only a few 'ud come to see if it was so. An' when they did come inside, they'd only larf, or maybe get riled at the sell, fer the dogs was really orful bad. They was willin' enough, most of 'em, but they seemed to 'a lost their brains. Doynes 'e'd 'a fixed 'em up right enough; 'e wor clever wi' dogs, 'e wor. 'E could 'a whacked talkin' into 'em, if he wanted, I believe; but I'—regretfully—'cannot ketch 'is stroke some'ow.

"'Ye'd be surprised to see 'ow thoughtful them dogs is sometimes, now. They seems to know when grub's scarce, just as we does, an' they'll not 'owl 'arf so 'ard fer their dinner when they see me and Doynes is a bit down i' the mug. In course they does bark a bit when their stomachs is empty, but allus in an apologizin' sort o' way, like as if they was ashamed o' theirsels fer doin' it. An' then when I pats 'em, an' tells 'em I'm very sorry, but there ain't anythink fer 'em to eat, they'll wag their tails as much as to say, "We catches your meanin' an' winks," an' then they'll go out an' steal as natteral as any Christian.

"'But latterly I's been so bothered wi' this yer cough that I kinder frighten people away, an' so Doynes's vittles 'as been worse ner ever. But 'e's been very good about it. 'E 'asn't grumbled much sin' 'e saw as I couldn't 'elp it. The other show folks says as 'e's a selfish brute, but they're liars, liars every one on 'em. Didn't 'e pick me up when I was a snivellin' little brat by t' road-side, an' 'asn't 'e kep' me wi' him ever sin'?'

"Poor lass, she has struggled bravely against her illness, often keeping on her legs through sheer force of will when weakness made everything seem to swim before her. But when she arrived here with a lot of others for the village tide—as they call the feast—just a week ago, the tent in which Doynes's performing dogs were wont to perform was not set up. Dolly Bobs came sneaking in here late at night in mortal fear of his wife—for Liz was a pariah among her people—and told me why, and gave me Liz's history as far as he knew it. He came really to relieve his conscience, I believe, by asking me to go and see her, evidently doubting whether I would do so when no pay was forthcoming—sordid old brute.

"Of course, I did go; and I found things even worse than he had told me. The caravan was a fearfully dilapidated old rattle-trap, weather-beaten and rotten to the last degree; and but for a couple of mangy mongrel curs which were crouching on the steps, there wasn't a sign of life about it. The battered tin chimney gave out no smoke; both doors were closely shut; the windows were half-covered with

painted imitations of curtains. I knocked and went in. Everything was frightfully ruinous and poverty-stricken, and there was plenty of evidence to show that nothing had been done in the tidying line lately. There was a bunk against each wall at the opposite end. In one of them the bearded face of a man of about five or eight and thirty showed itself; in the other lay a woman, young, still good-looking, but terribly emaciated, and evidently in the last stage of consumption.

"'Are you the doctor?' she asked. I told her that I was, and that Valtolski had sent me in to see her.

"'Yes, yes,' she said, hurriedly, 'an' it's very kind o' yer to come to t' likes o' me. But see Doynes; 'e's been orful bad to-day. It ain't ketchin' 'im in 'is back where it used, but 'igher up like. An' there's a somethin' i' 'is throat as makes 'im 'e don't want to eat, sir. There's a beautiful piece o' biled 'am aside 'im.'

"And as poor Liz indicated the viand in question, I could see that she considered this refusal to eat as the most dangerous symptom of all. In his case also the diagnosis was a simple one. He might live a week, or a couple of days, or a few hours; or he might die in a matter of minutes.

"'I'll send him some beef-tea,' I told her.

"'But med'cin'—give 'im some med'cin' as well, an' I'll pay yer wi' the first brass we gets; I will, s'welp me bob.'

"It is extraordinary what faith these people put in drugs. However, not that all the physic in the world would have done him any good, but merely to pacify her, I said: 'Oh, yes, of course; it will come with the beef-tea.' And then I tried to hint to her how dangerously ill she was herself. But she burst out into a torrent of abuse—probably because I had confirmed her own ideas — and finished up by saying, vehemently:

"'I mustn't, I cannot die, I willn't die! There's Doynes there as 'elpless as 'e can be, wus'n usual, in fact, an' if I pegs out, who's to look arter 'im? No,' she continued, excitedly, raising herself on one elbow, 'it's no use yer 'intin' at them outside—the other show folks. They'd send 'im to the poor'ouse, they would, like as they wanted to do afore. But 'e's mine, mine—

all mine, an' 'e shalln't be took away! Doctor,' she went on, first sinking back out of sheer exhaustion, and then raising herself up again, and clutching at my hand with the feverish energy of despair, 'doctor, yer will gi'e me sutthing to mak' me strong agen, willn't yer? Sutthing as'll let me work the show agen, an' get Doynes bits o' stuff as 'e likes. Oh, if ye but knew 'ow it wor! 'Im an' the dogs 'as been the only things I's ever 'ad to—to—like; an' though folks sez dogs is best, I don't care—it's 'im, it's Doynes, as I wants t' 'ang on fer.'

"Well, there she fainted away; and from then till now I've been hanging around that old caravan the most of my time. I dare say"—brusquely—"you think me a bit of a fool for doing it; but I couldn't help myself. Besides, there was no one else. The parson—who is a very good fellow in his way, but lacking in tact—tried his hand; but Liz sent him about his business very quickly when he started lecturing her about her 'want of resignation,' as he was pleased to term it; and she can be pretty free with her tongue when she likes. Most of those sort of people can be; it's part of their business, you know. And the natives, for some reason or other, refused to go near.

"I was there this morning, as usual, and hardly expected the girl to live another hour. Indeed, she might have died any minute, and it was her will alone that kept her alive.

"'How's 'e?' she would mutely ask every few minutes or so; and when I told her, she seemed satisfied.

"And so it went on till about an hour before you arrived here. Then Doynes suddenly stopped breathing. She noticed it immediately—noticed it, in fact, before I did, and bade me look at him.

"He was dead, and I told her so.

"She smiled feebly and beckoned me down nearer to her, and, by laying my ear close against her lips, I could just make out the words above the pattering of the rain on the roof:

"'Told yer so—didn't die whiles 'e might want me. Say!—sell the caravan—give Doynes—swell funeral—an'——'

"But that was all. She had hastened after Doynes."

The Story Club is glad to add to its membership roll the name of Miss M. E. Torrence, who sends ROMANCE the following story of love and art.

PEN AM.

THE STORY OF LOTIS.[1]

MARTA said that he had married her only that her beauty might go down to future ages on his canvas, and immortalize his name. But then Marta was only a peasant woman, with a broad, good-humored face and twinkling blue eyes and a stout, comfortable figure, clad in a dark-blue homespun gown that did not fit her anywhere, and two wooden shoes that went klop, klop, on the bare floor. And she had a little chubby boy, as round and fat and good-natured as she was, and a husband whose life was bounded on the east by breakfast, on the west by supper, on the south by his sheepfold and on the north by a little strip of woodland that he had inherited from his father, where he cut fuel to sell in the little town not far away. And Marta had never been two miles from the little village where she was born, except once when she went to town with Hans on the top of a load of wood, and she had been so frightened by the many people she had seen in that wonderful place that she had never cared to repeat the journey.

"The world is too big for me," she said. "I will stay by the house and look after the chickens and make the cheese, and let Hans battle with the world if it must be done."

"She was beautiful as the morning," Marta said, "when the first gold rays of the sun glint through he pink clouds of dawn, and she is sweet as the wild spring blossoms that nestle away in the moss that covers the roots of the old trees in the woodland, and she is gracious as the Madonna that stands in the vestry at St. Glyde's and looks down with loving eyes on the passers-by."

Marta could see them as she paused in the labor of tending the cabbages and glanced up at the window

[1] Copyrighted by the Author.

that looked southward. He came and stood by her, and Marta thought of the summer morning clouded over with a sudden tempest, or of a lark caught in the talons of a great black bird of prey. Marta fancied that she had been growing steadily paler since the Meister had begun to paint her picture, days and days ago. But then Marta was so afraid of the great staring waste of canvas, with the face just beginning to dawn upon it, like the spectral faces one sees by looking a long time into the blackness of a very dark night, that maybe she only imagined that the lady shared her feeling and was losing color and life in its constant presence.

"Is the Meister at home?" asked a voice near her. Such a voice! It was like the music Lotis made on some queer kind of thing she had brought from that far and mysterious country whence she came. She played on it summer nights when the moon was like a silver flame in the sky and the stars shrank away into the horizon before the blaze of her glory. And the sound of it made Marta's heart thrill, just as did the sound of this strange voice. The Herr Meister's voice was like a heavy weight, and pressed Marta down fathoms deep when she heard it.

"Yes, mein herr," she said.

Then she looks up at the window where the Meister is standing, and he is alone now, or standing so that Lotis is hid from view, and Marta thinks again of the summer day swallowed by the shadowy night, and she looks from the dark figure of the old artist to the graceful young form at her side, and then she goes to the door and shows him in, and comes back to work again in the garden.

The next time Marta saw the handsome stranger he was sitting on the balcony with the Meister, and they were conversing about something in which she felt not the slightest interest, supposing she could not understand it, and being very glad she could not, for to understand anything about the Meister's subjects of conversation would verge dangerously near the diabolical.

Lotis came out on the balony. Marta could see the stranger looking at her with eyes that were like great

wells of light; not at all like the dark caves through which the old Meister looked out upon the world. Marta had seen the eyes of Lotis shine like that sometimes when she sat alone and looked out of the window, far away, as if she saw not anything that was before her eyes, but something, the memory of which lingered in her heart. But they had never glowed in that way in the Meister's presence. Then they were like sombre dusks of night, wherein no light was.

Now the Meister had gone from the balcony, and only Lotis and the stranger were left in the fading light. It was much more beautiful, Marta thought. All was serene and pure and peaceful when his dark face was gone. She saw the stranger come very close to Lotis and bend over her, and say something in a low tone, and look long into the eyes that were uplifted to his, and she wondered what beautiful thought he was uttering.

Lotis clasped her hands tightly until the nails cut the soft flesh, and sobbed:

"O Beltran, why did you come?"

And he said:

"Did you not want to see me?"

And she made no answer.

It was growing dark now, and Marta went away, and the slow, heavy footsteps of the Meister were heard going down to his studio, and there was no one in that lonely place to see the two on the balcony; and now the stranger took the hand of Lotis and held it to his lips while the purple twilight trailed softly out from the low line of forest. A very little hand it was, and soft as a white rose petal, but it hid the whole world for him.

"Oh, why did you come? How could you?"

"How could I help it?"

He leaned over her until his lips touched her soft hair, and only the fire-fly saw it as he glanced by, and he shut up his lantern very quickly, that no one else might see, and the heavy veil of the night was unbroken.

"It is a strange, dark place in which to find you," he said. "Why did you come?"

"'Why?' Can you ask—having seen him? I think there is no one who could refuse anything he asked.

Oh, but he does not ask. He only wills, and the victim does what he wills. He has only to think, and all the world is ready to carry out his thought. Why did I come? Oh, but I did not come; I was brought!"

"Does he know—about me?"

"How can I tell? I think there is nothing he does not know. He goes down into the depths of the earth, and there is no secret buried there so deep that he does not find it. He soars aloft into the sky, and there is no knowledge so high that he does not attain unto it. Were I on the other side of the earth and he called me, I should come to him—unwillingly, but—I should come. Were I under the sea and he should even wish for me, I should rise from the waves and fall at his feet. And I hate him—oh, I hate him so that the world is a horror to me because he is in it."

She shuddered and leaned against the column that supported the balcony. She heard the river down below rushing along to the sea. A boat was drifting slowly with the tide. Its white sails gleamed like silver in the moonlight.

"Lotis!" He bent over her—so close that his breath swept her like a flame.

But she shrank away from him and cried in a voice of pain:

"He is calling me; do you not hear? He calls me in his thought, and there is not a sound of any voice, but I hear and must go."

The darkest of night shadows fell over the balcony, and Beltran was alone. A storm was coming up from the low line of forest. He could see the flashes of lightning, and a low roll of thunder shook the air.

The portrait went bravely on. The eyes were like living, dancing flames, like the eyes with which Lotis had looked upon the world in that far-away time when she first came; now they looked as if all the light had gone out of them into the canvas. The smile that played around the mouth—that was the real smile, and the sorrowful curve on the lips, as Marta saw them now, was only a pathetic pretence. Could they not see that all the life of the Lady Lotis was going out from her into the canvas, and that she was fading away just in proportion as it was blooming into perfect

beauty? But, mayhap, that was what the Meister wanted.

"There is one more sitting," said the artist to Beltran. "You shall see it finished. Then you will be at liberty to go if you are tired of us. You promised to stay for that."

He wondered if the Meister knew. If he had known, would he have asked him to stay? It would seem not; but one could never tell what the Meister would do. One never knew why he did anything. Why did he look intently at Lotis, until her face grew paler and paler, as if his gaze were a heavy frost that had fallen upon the roses on her cheeks? Why did he do any of those things that he was always doing?

"Are you coming?" she had said as she turned to go. Beltran had caught her hand as she was leaving him, and had held it to his lips, and the bright color had come back for a moment to her cheeks, and she had been like a flame that flashes up warm and glowing on the altar—all the colder for the memory of the fire that once burned there. There is nothing in life or death so cold as the altar where a fire has once burned.

A white rose lay on the floor. It had fallen from her hair as she turned away. He took it up and laid it on his lips. It was odorous with a subtle perfume that always lingered in her hair. Would he ever forget how the bright color had flamed in her face as she turned to leave him?

He kissed the rose passionately, as if it had been warm living lips, and it fell to pieces, and the snow-white petals lay upon the floor at his feet. The poor white thing was dead—dead, like the joys of his youth—dead, like the soul of the woman who had worn it—dead, as all bright things die in the darkness of earth.

The door of the studio was open and he went in. The picture stood on the easel. The picture? No, but it was the real woman—the Lotis he had known years ago. Not the pale phantom Lotis, who had moved like a dream through the house in all those weeks he had waited for the finishing of that picture, but the living, soulful, joyous Lotis of other days. It was the soul with all the life-glow and bloom in it that belonged to her once—ages ago when they had wand-

ered together through the groves of the Southland. The warm light of sunset dwelt in the soft waves of the hair; the fire of life—leaping, glancing, tumultuous life—glowed in the deep, dark eyes; changeful smiles played about the curves of the witching lips. It was the warm, living, glowing Lotis, in whose presence the pale vision, seated before the easel, was only a dead shadow. "Lotis!" he called passionately, but he did not look at the shadowy model, but only at the beautiful woman on the canvas, where the setting sun lit up the glowing face like a flame.

"You have come in time to see the last stroke of my brush. Behold the end of my work. Did you ever see anything more life-like? The old masters never did anything like that. They painted with mere colors on dead canvas. Feeble creatures! did they think to make themselves immortal? Did they fancy that so flimsy a shadow could go down the ages and speak their names in a voice that the world would hear? I put life on my canvas—the soul, that shall make the dead thing live forever. See, the last stroke in the work that is to tell the world through all coming time that I have lived."

He put the brush to the canvas, touching up a line with a swift but careful touch. There was a low cry from the pale lips of the woman, a cry like the plaintive farewell of a soul to earth, and it thrilled the heart of Beltran with terror. He caught Lotis as she would have fallen to the floor.

"She has fainted," he said, carrying her to the window where a soft breeze floated in. But the Meister laughed scornfully.

"Ay, give her air; but she will not breathe. Hold her in your arms; her heart will not beat in answer to yours. Kiss her cold lips; they will not know your touch. Call her the gentle names you called her when you did not know that I could hear; she will not listen, though you should thunder them in tones that would shake the earth. Clasp her still hands; she will not feel your touch, though it were like the weight of the universe. You may have all that is left of her now. I have her soul on my canvas, and it will go down the ages and speak my name to the wondering world."

He came closer and laid his hand on Beltran's arm. It was like a wave of fire. His breath swept Beltran's cheek like a wind from a burning plain. He was all aglow with passion. It was as if a mountain of ice had suddenly burst into flame. He spoke in a low, suppressed voice, and yet it seemed to fill the room with sound:

"I loved her. Loved? Nay—I love her. Do you know what that means? Why should I ask you? You know? How could it be possible? You admire the bloom on a fair woman's cheek—you call it love. You warm your poor little chill fancy by the glow that dances in a soft dark eye—you call it love. Could you so love a woman that she would give her soul to you, though she cared not for you? Could you so love her that you would see her earthly form crumble into dust, that you might seize her beauty, her life, her gentle womanhood, and fix them on your canvas, to be linked with your name forever? Could you so love her that even the ambition that dominated your whole life was nothing to you, unshared by her? Oh, you need not tell me what you are thinking. You think I cared only for my own fame and not at all for her. But you do not know. It is like your flimsy little soul to think that. You can know nothing about it. Do you think I would have stopped to look twice at her, only for my own ambition? Or do you think any man, having seen her once—any man with a soul, I mean, in place of the puny little imbecility which you call your heart—could ever again have an aspiration apart from her? Fame is nothing to me if not linked with her. But why should I speak to you? for you will not understand—you cannot, and why I spend time and breath in telling you, I know not. That is all."

He leaned against the easel that supported the picture, and was silent. The glow died out from his face and left it cold and impassive as before.

The night fell darkly over the world. The faint light from a star struggled dimly through a bank of clouds. The mournful note of a bird quivered out on the still air, then sank away in silence.

Lotis did not move.

The story of a man who did not want to think. It is by Opie P. Read, and is taken from the St. Paul *Pioneer-Press*.

DAN MITERS.

CHAPTER I.

Dan Miters was especially drunk. By this I mean that any other man in the village of Cane Hill might have been drunk—and indeed other men of that respectable community had been known to indulge too heartily in drink—but that Dan Miters, being the acknowledged drunkard of the place, was especially and particularly intoxicated. He was a man of acknowledged sense. He had, gossip said, as a prelude to some disparaging statement concerning his weakness, carried off the honors at a well-known school. One thing was certain. He expressed himself in better language than even the county judge could hope to employ, and this, at Cane Hill, was regarded as a convincing assertion of a higher education.

Dan had first come to the village as the agent of a nursery; not that sort of a nursery which would disprove the declaration that marriage, among the poor at least, is a failure to perpetuate human misery, but as the agent of a company which had fruit trees for sale. He did not thoroughly succeed in running the gauntlet of village curiosity, for villagers are critical of appearances, and a lazy lounger who sits all day at the store, while his wife is taking in washing—the utterly worthless fellow who would rather wallow in the mire with a black falsehood than to recline on a velvet couch with a bright truth; who wears a filthy shirt and one "bed-tick" suspender; who chews charity tobacco and spits at a knot-hole which, he thinks by the right of his own yellow slime, he has pre-empted—that fellow will criticise the clothes and facial expression of a stranger.

Dan was criticised, not only by the worthless loafer, but by the merchant, and even by the faded woman who had slipped in to exchange a few eggs for a small

piece of calico. They declared that Dan's hair was too red, and that there were too many freckles on his face; and it was agreed that he did not dress as a gentleman should. The worthless loafer squirted at his pre-empted knot-hole and remarked:

"Now you're gittin' right down to the squar' facts."

That was a long time ago. Dan was absorbed into the community's social system, and became celebrated as the village drunkard. Previous to his achievement of this distinction, the fame had belonged to one Peter B. Rush, and it appeared that he could never be robbed of the reputation which he had laboriously acquired, but after a few years of close contest, Peter B. Rush's warmest admirers were forced to acknowledge that the palm belonged to Dan Miters. What a handy man was Miters when a comparison was needed! What an encouragement to innovation! A man, in speaking of some one who was stupidly influenced by liquor, was no longer under the necessity of saying that he was as drunk as the disreputable canine associate of the fiddler, but simply fulfilled all demands by affirming that he was as drunk as Dan Miters.

Seriously—and unfortunately we are all compelled to be serious at times—the man of twenty-five whose education had not been neglected was, at forty-five, a hopeless vagabond, with every hope trampled into the mud away down the road behind him. He did odd jobs, cleaned out cellars, and cut fire-wood for scolding women.

One day, when he appeared to be soberer than usual, the mayor of the village thus addressed him:

"Dan, I would like to know something about your life."

"And I, sir," Dan replied, "would like to know something about my death."

"You are a funny fellow, Dan."

"No doubt of it, sir. A corpse has been known to grin."

"Come, don't talk that way. You have been here now about twenty years and none of us know where you were born."

"And do you really want to know where I was born?"

"Yes, I'd like to know."

"Well, sir, I was born in the night."

"There you go again. Say, do you know that if you would brace up there is yet time for you to accomplish something?"

"Yes? But you have tried, and what have you accomplished?"

"Why, I own a good house and lot—I am married and have a family of interesting children."

"Is that all?"

"But isn't that enough?"

"Hardly, for you have not taught your children not to feel, and until you do this your marriage stands as a wrong. About a year ago one of your boys lost an arm at a saw-mill. Weren't you the primary cause of his suffering, and is not a primary cause the meanest of all causes?"

"I won't talk to you," the mayor declared. "There is no reason in your argument and no humanity in your conclusions. But come," he added in a softened voice, "why don't you make an effort to keep sober?"

"I don't want to keep sober."

"And why not?"

"Because sobriety is the mother of thought."

"And you don't want to think—is that it?"

"Yes."

"And why don't you want to think? Your thoughts might amount to something. The greatest man, you know, is the greatest thinker."

"So is the greatest sufferer."

"And when you think you suffer, eh?"

"Yes, and so do all men. Go into a library and look about you. What do you see?"

"Books," the mayor answered.

"And what are books?"

"Gifts from superior minds."

"No," said the drunkard. "They are the records of human suffering. Every great book is an ache from a heart and a pain-throb from a brain. But what's the use of all this talk? What concerns me most at present is, where am I going to get a drink?"

"You don't need a drink, Dan."

"There you go with your dogmatism. There you

go, measuring the grains of my want in your half-bushel. You don't need a drink and you say that I don't. I would not presume to say what other men need, but it seems to be the province of all other men to dictate to me. Come, I am growing too sober, and shall begin to think pretty soon. Won't you please help me out? Let me have twenty-five cents; you can spare it. A man who doesn't drink has but little real need for money, anyway. Let me have twenty-five cents and I'll do any sort of work you want me to."

"Will you help me fix up the address I've got to deliver at that political gathering?"

"Yes, I will."

"And swear you'll never tell that you helped me?"

"Yes, I'll do that, too."

"And you will draw up a paper swearing that you didn't write the address I delivered last month to the Oddfellows? I want you to do this, for I have heard it hinted around that you had a hand in it."

"Yes, I'll do anything."

Dan was about to turn away after receiving the money, when he caught sight of a woman crossing the court-house yard.

"Who is that?" he asked.

"Mrs. Burkley, the widow we have employed to teach our school," the mayor answered.

"Where did she come from?"

"From Wilson County, I believe. Did you ever meet her?"

"I think not," he said, and hastened toward a doggery on the opposite side of the street.

CHAPTER II.

On a hill a short distance from the village, a hill shaded by poplar trees, was an old school-house, originally built of logs, but now, weather-boarded and whitewashed. The Widow Burkley had just told the children that they might go out and play until she called them, when the door was darkened by a reddish apparition. The widow uttered a befitting little shriek, and then, realizing that there was no serious cause for alarm, said: "Come in." She would not have extended this

invitation had she not wanted to set an example of courage.

Dan Miters stepped into the room. He stood for a moment, looking at the widow, and then said: "Don't be afraid of me. I saw you yesterday and didn't know but you——"

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the woman.

"That is what I was going to ask," Dan replied, seating himself on a bench. "Twenty years make a great change in appearances, even though hearts sometimes remain the same."

"Have you come here to reproach me? Children," she added, turning to several youngsters that showed a disposition to loiter about the door, "run along now and play."

The children vanished, and the widow, after looking out to see if they were within hearing, said: "I have suffered too much to bear reproach now."

"But don't you think that you are deserving of reproach?" he asked.

"No. I acted as I thought best. I promised to marry you, and while you were with me you did exercise so strong an influence that I thought I loved you, but when you were gone, I knew that I didn't. I saw that I was charmed by your mind, but not warmed by your heart. Another man came. He was not bright, he had many foolish words, but love is expressed in words that are foolish. You awoke my admiration; he thrilled my heart. Then I wrote and told you not to think of me again. I was buried in the roses of my own happiness. How could I think of you?"

"And you married that man?"

"Yes."

"And were you happy?"

"For a time. Then the dew fell off the flowers. What could the flowers do but wither? We went to a distant town, and there he deserted me."

"Is he still living?"

"He was hanged."

"Do you love his memory?"

"No, for I have learned to think, and thought is a dagger to foolish love."

"Did you know that I was here?"

"No; some one told me that you were lost at sea."

"Did you sorrow over the news?"

"No; I did not love you."

"Did you not hear something else?"

"Not until a year ago, and then I heard that you were alive and a hopeless drunkard."

"Weren't you moved at that?"

"I was moved with pity."

"And would your pity sink deeper into your heart if I were to tell you that I am the most hopeless of all drunkards? Look at me. Look." He opened his coat. "I have given my old shirt to a negro for a drink. Does your pity sink deeper?"

"Oh, please go away, George, go away. You distress me nearly to death. My God! I have suffered enough."

"Ah, but not for me. You have suffered because your own heart has been wrung; you have not suffered because of my degradation and despair. Mary, you still have it in your power to save me. With your help I can kill my appetite. I can do something for us both. Be my wife and atone for the awful wreck you made years ago."

"George, I have always been true to myself. I don't love you."

"Couldn't you learn—couldn't there be progress?"

"There could be progress, but that progress would be toward hatred."

He looked at her in silence. He took up his old hat, which had been dropped on the floor, and turned it round and round in his hand. He looked down at his shoes, from which his toes protruded. He got up with a stagger, gazed at her a moment, and then an expression, not a smile, but an expression like that which follows the swallowing of a bitter draught, broke through the red stubble about his mouth. "Mrs.—I don't know your name," he began, "but Mrs. Somebody, you are the most merciless creature that ever lived."

"The children say I'm kind."

"You have the spirit of a vampire."

"The children think I have the spirit of gentleness."

"I hope you may die the most horrible of all deaths.

I pray to God that you may die of hydrophobia—I implore God that a mad dog may bury his teeth in your throat."

"Go away!" she answered. "Come, children," she cried. "Go away from here, you monster! I hate you! I wish—but I can't think of anything horrible enough. Now go."

* * * * * *

The village was the scene of fear-inspired ferment. A report that a powerful mad dog had been seen in the neighborhood had been brought in by an excited farmer. The bravest of men shudder at the sight of a mad dog. Men that would fight a grizzly bear tremble when they see a mad dog. Every man in the village went armed. Double fastenings were put on every door. The Widow Burkley was terror-stricken. She could not be induced to leave her room. Gradually the excitement died away. School was resumed, but the widow was tremulous.

She left the school-house very late one evening. Two rebellious boys had been kept in. When liberated the boys ran away. The widow tried to keep up with them. She could not. She was hurrying along the path when a man came dashing past on ahorse. "Mad dog! mad dog!" he yelled. She screamed and looked back. The dog was bounding toward her. She fainted.

No one had the courage to look for the widow. Late at night, almost a maniac, she knocked at the door of the house where she boarded.

Morning came. A startling discovery was made. Dan and the mad dog were found lying across the path near the place where the widow had fainted. The dog's teeth were buried in Dan's throat. Dan's fingers were stiffened about the dog's neck. Both were dead.

Neither storied urn nor animated bust could do much for this young artist who never knew that he was famous. The New York *Evening Sun* is the story-teller.

A TRAGIC JOKE.

EVER since Paul Cornoyer had drawn landscapes and browsing cattle on his slate at school, his mother had believed in his genius. She did not hope that he would become an artist some day—she knew it. She had treasured his pencil sketches, each one better than the last, and felt he would make a name for himself when he grew up.

Paul's father was a wholesale liquor dealer, a hard-headed man, unsentimental, who measured conscience by dollars and gauged the world by greenbacks. He did not believe in the soul of art. He did not know such a thing existed; so when Paul left school and talked of Paris and studios and Art with a capital A, his father looked at him as if he thought he were crazy.

"Send you to Paris for two years? Not much, my boy. I've heard a thing or two about Paris, and as for art—well, that's as good an excuse as any for going to Paris."

There was where the mother came in. She came to the defence. She exhibited, first, the boyish sketches, then the better drawings made by the pencil of the growing youth, and finally a washy sketch of a dark corner of the warehouse done in water-color.

The last bit of realism caught the old man's fancy. The clever conception of sunlight streaming through the dust-laden atmosphere and touching the grimy barrels with a golden light, perhaps reminded him of their value in the same colored metal. How natural the rust on the hoops and that cobweb over the right-hand window-pane looked to him! But what pleased him most was not the beauty of the coloring or the composition, but the fact that the boy had not omitted to suggest faintly the letters on one barrel which read:

FINE 40-YEAR-OLD
KENTUCKY BLUE GRASS.

And he straightway offered Paul the magnificent sum of $2.50 if he would make the letters plainer, so he could use it as an advertisement. It would look fine in the sample-room with a touch of bright red or yellow in it and a $1.50 gold frame, he thought. And if the firm name could be worked into that streak of sunlight in blue letters, how well it would go!

This was the extent of the paternal appreciation of the artistic efforts of his son, but it was appreciated to a certain extent. And the picture won the old man over.

It was settled afterward that Paul should go to Paris and work under the eyes of the great artists.

"But," said the man of gin and whiskey, "if you do not get a picture hung up in the big saloon over there after two years, you mustn't expect no more money from me, for I'll give you nothing. You'll have to shift for yourself, and I'll put what I've squandered on you down to profit and loss and close the books."

Paul sailed away with a hopeful heart. He studied under excellent painters, and became a faithful and conscientious student. For a year he worked hard.

"Next year," he thought. "Only two years to study before I offer a picture to the salon. But it's got to be done and I'll do it." And so the pile of studies in his studio grew larger, and each one showed a bolder hand and a clearer thought than its predecessor.

Early in the spring of the second year he started for the coast of Malaga to conceive what was to be his masterpiece—his picture for the salon. For a month he worked feverishly until he settled down to one subject, then the artistic fever came strong upon him, and it was only when he slept that his hands did not bear the burden of brushes and palette.

The canvas that so engrossed his mind was a picture of the coast of Spain near Malaga, which he was enlarging and composing from faithful sketches done on the spot. The scene was thoroughly Mediterranean.

In the foreground was a sandy dune covered with wild laurels, cactus, and aloe, interspersed with silken spears of burned yellow grass. The brilliant salmon-colored sand showed in patches here and there, while

crouched behind this clump of vegetation were three soldiers of the coast guard, peering through the leaves at a boat whose orange-colored sail was plainly visible off shore.

The picture was finished, and he brought it to Paris and sent it to the salon. Then followed the anxious days, until finally the day came when the decision of the judges was to be announced. Paul sat in a café with a dozen other artists, all waiting for news from their pictures, when in walked Jack Jenkins, another Yankee artist, who shared Paul's studio. He had just had good, good news, and he felt so delighted that his mind had conceived a brilliant joke, and he gravely proceeded to carry it out.

"Your picture's been rejected, old boy," he said, slapping Paul on the back, "and so has mine; but we'll try again, eh?" and he winked at the other artists.

Without a word Cornoyer went out. He walked directly to his studio, and sitting down at a table wrote a brief note.

"Dear mother," it ran. "I'm tired out, and it's no use. My picture was not hung in the salon. Good-by."

An hour later Jenkins came up the steps two at a time. He had been looking for Paul, and wondered where he had gone. He opened the door of the studio and stepped in quickly.

His foot stepped in something wet; he hastily struck a match, and by its flickering light he saw Paul stretched out on the floor with a revolver in his right hand. He was dead.

Jack stared without uttering a sound. Then he picked up the revolver, lighted another match, and looked into the cylinder. Four cartridges remained. The match burned down to his finger and he dropped it. The burning end fell upon the floor where it was wet, and sputtered out as Jack pulled back the hammer.

A delegation of friends came to the studio the next day to congratulate the two American artists over the success of their pictures, and to tell Paul that his picture had taken the third medal.

They found two bodies, lying one across the other.

Convincing a sceptic. This story of hypnotism is from the *Argosy*.

AUNT PHŒBE'S HEIRLOOMS.

We do not take to new ideas readily in Bishopsthorpe. Our fashions are always at least one season behind the times; it is only by a late innovation in post-office regulations that we are now enabled to get our London papers on the day of their publication, and a craze, social or scientific, has almost been forgotten by the fashionable world before it manages to establish any kind of footing in our neighborhood.

It therefore came upon us with more or less of a shock one morning a short time ago to find the walls of our sleepy little country town placarded with flaming posters announcing that Prof. Dmitri Sclamowsky intended to visit Bishopsthorpe on the following Friday, for the purpose of exhibiting in the Town Hall some of his marvellous powers in thought-reading, mesmerism, and hypnotism.

Stray rumors from time to time, and especially of late, had visited us of strange experiments in connection with these outlandish sciences, if sciences they can be called; but we had received these with incredulity, mingled with compassion for such weak-minded persons as could be easily duped by the clever conjuring of paid charlatans.

This, at least, was very much the mental attitude of my Aunt Phœbe, and it was only under strong pressure from me and one or two others of the younger and more enterprising section of Bishopsthorpe society that she at last reluctantly consented to patronize the professor's performance in person.

Even at the last moment she almost failed us.

"I am getting too old a woman, my dear Elizabeth," she said to me as I was helping her to dress, "to leave my comfortable fireside after dinner for the sake of seeing second-rate conjuring."

"Indeed, it is good of you," I said, as I disposed a piece of soft old point lace in graceful folds round the

neck of her black velvet dress; "but virtue will be its own reward, for I am sure you will enjoy it as much as any of us, and as for being old, that is all nonsense! Just look in the glass, and then say if you have a heart to cheat Bishopsthorpe of a sight of you in all your glory."

"You are a silly girl, Elizabeth!" said my aunt, and yet she did as I suggested, and, walking up to the long pier-glass, looked at her reflection with a well-pleased smile. "Indeed," she continued, turning back to me to where I stood by the dressing-table, "I think I am as silly as you are to rig myself out like this," and she pointed to the double row of large single diamonds I had clasped round her neck, and the stars of the same precious stones which twinkled and flashed in the lace of her cap.

"Come, Aunt Phœbe," I said, drawing down her hands, which had made a movement as though she would have taken off the glittering gauds, "you don't often give the good Bishopsthorpe folk a chance of admiring the Anstruther heirlooms. They look so lovely! Don't take them off, please! What is the use of having beautiful things if they are always hidden away in a jewelry case? There now," I went on, "I hear the carriage at the door; here is your fur cloak; you must wrap yourself up well, for it is a cold night," and so saying I muffled her up, and hustled her down-stairs before she could remonstrate, even had she wished to do so.

The little Town Hall was already crowded when we arrived, but seats had been reserved for us in one of the front rows of benches. Many eyes were turned on us as we made our way to our places, for Aunt Phœbe was looked up to as one of the corner-stones of aristocracy in Bishopsthorpe, and I fancied that I caught an expression of relief on the faces of some of those present, who until the entertainment had been sanctioned by her presence had probably felt doubtful as to its complete orthodoxy. But, of course, I may have been wrong. Aunt Phœbe is always telling me I am too imaginative.

It seemed as though the professor had awaited our arrival to begin the performance, for we had hardly

taken our seats when the curtain, which had hitherto hidden the stage from our view, rolled up and discovered the professor standing with his hand resting upon an easel, on which was placed a large blackboard.

I think the general feeling in the room was that of disappointment. I know that I, for one, had hoped to see something more interesting than the usual paraphernalia of a lecture on astronomy or geology.

Professor Sclamowsky, too, was not at all as impressive a person as his name had led me to expect. He was short and thick-set. His close-cropped hair was of the undecided color which fair hair assumes when it is beginning to turn gray, and a heavy mustache of the same uninteresting hue hid his mouth. His jaw was heavy and slightly underhung, and his neck was thick and coarse.

Altogether his appearance was remarkably unprepossessing and commonplace.

In a short speech, spoken with a slightly foreign accent, which some way or other struck me as being assumed, he begged to disclaim all intention of conjuring. His performance was solely and entirely a series of experiments in and illustrative of the wonderful science of hypnotism: a science still in its infancy, but destined to take its place among the most marvellous of modern discoveries.

As he spoke, his heavy, uninteresting face lit up as with a hidden enthusiasm, and my attention was attracted to his eyes, which I had not before noticed. They were of a curious bright metallic blue, and are the only eyes I have ever seen—though one reads and hears so perpetually of them—which really seemed to flash as he warmed to his subject.

As he finished I looked at Aunt Phœbe, who shrugged her shoulders and smiled incredulously. It was clear that she was not going to be imposed upon by his specious phrases.

It is unnecessary to weary my readers by describing at length how the usual preliminary of choosing an unbiassed committee was gone through, nor how, after the doctor, the rector, Mr. Melton (the principal draper in Bishopsthorpe), and several other of the town magnates, all men of irreproachable hon-

esty, had been induced to act in this capacity, the professor proceeded, with eyes blindfolded and holding the doctor's hand in his, to find a carefully-hidden pin, to read the number of a bank-note and to write the figures one by one on the blackboard, and to perform other experiments of the same kind amid the breathless interest of the audience.

I frankly admit that I was astonished and bewildered by what I saw, and I had a little uneasy feeling that if it were not all a piece of gigantic humbug it was not quite canny—not quite right.

What struck me most was the unfussy, untheatrical way in which it was all done. Every one of the professor's movements was marked by an air of calm certainty. He threaded his way through the crowded benches with such an unhesitating step that, only that I had seen the bandage fastened over his eyes by the rector and afterward carefully examined by the doctor, neither of whom could be suspected of complicity, I should have said he must have had some little peep-hole arranged to enable him to guide his course so unfalteringly.

There were, of course, thunders of applause from the six-penny seats when the thought-reading part of the entertainment came to an end.

"Well, Aunt Phœbe," I said, turning to her as the professor bowed his thanks, "what do you think?"

"Think, my dear!" she repeated. "I think the man is a very fair conjurer."

"But," I protested, "how could he know where the pin was, and you know Mr. Danby himself fastened the handkerchief?"

"My dear Elizabeth, I have seen Houdin do far more wonderful things when I was a girl, but he had the honesty to call it by its right name—conjuring."

I had not time to carry on the discussion, for the professor now reappeared and informed us that by far the most interesting part of the performance was still to come. Thought-reading and mesmerism, or, as some people preferred to call it, hypnotism, were, he believed, different parts of the same wonderful and but very partially-understood power. A power so little understood as not even to possess a distinctive name;

a power which he believed to be latent in everybody, but which was capable of being brought to more or less perfection, according to the amount of care and attention bestowed upon it. "I," said the professor, "have given my life to it." And again I fancied I saw the curious blue eyes flash with a sudden unexpected fire.

"In the experiments which I am about to show you," he went on, "I am assisted by my daughter, Anna Sclamowsky," and, drawing back a curtain at the back of the stage, he led forward a girl who looked to be between sixteen and eighteen years old.

There was no sort of family resemblance between father and daughter. She was tall and slight, with a small, dark head prettily poised on a long, slender neck. Her face was pale, and her large dark eyes had a startled, frightened look as she gazed at the sea of strange faces below her. Her father placed her in a chair facing us all, and turning once more to the audience said:

"I shall now, with your kind permission, put my daughter into a mesmeric or hypnotic trance, and while she is in it I hope to show you some particularly interesting experiments. Look at me, Anna—so——"

He placed his fingers for a moment on her eyelids and then stood aside. Except that the girl was now perfectly motionless and that her gaze was unnaturally fixed, I could see nothing different in her appearance from what it had been a few moments before.

The professor now turned to Mr. Danby, who was seated beside me, and said: "If this gentleman will oblige me by stepping upon the stage, he can assure himself by any means he may choose to use that my daughter is in a perfectly unconscious state at this moment; and if it will give the audience and himself any more confidence in the sincerity of this experiment, he is perfectly at liberty to blindfold her. Then if he will be kind enough to go through the room and touch here and there any person he may fancy, my daughter, at a word from me, will in the same order and in the same manner touch each of those already touched. I myself will, during the whole of the time, stand at the far end of the hall, so that there can be no sort of communication between us."

So saying, Sclamowsky left the stage, and walking down the room, placed himself with his back against the wall and fixed his gaze upon the motionless form of his daughter.

As I looked back at him, even though separated from him by the length of the hall, I could see the strange glitter and flash of his eyes. It gave me an uncomfortable, uneasy feeling, and I turned my face again toward the stage, where the good-natured rector was following out the directions he had received.

He lifted Anna Sclamowsky's arm, which, on his relaxing his hold, fell limp and lifeless by her side; he snapped his fingers suddenly close before her wide-open eyes without producing even a quiver of a muscle in her set face. He shouted in her ear; shook her by the shoulders; but all without succeeding in making her show sign of consciousness. He then tied a handkerchief over her eyes, and, leaving the stage, went about through the room, touching people here and there as he went, pursuing a most tortuous course, and ended at last by placing his hand upon Aunt Phœbe's diamond necklace. He then bowed to the professor, to intimate that we were ready to see the conclusion of the experiment.

Sclamowsky moved forward about a pace, beckoned with his hand, and called, not loudly but distinctly, "Anna!"

Without a moment's hesitation the girl, still blindfolded, rose, walked swiftly down the steps which led from the stage to the floor of the hall, and with startling exactness reproduced Mr. Danby's actions. In and out through the benches she passed amid a silence of breathless interest, touching each person in exactly the same spot as Mr. Danby had done a few minutes previously.

I saw Aunt Phœbe drawing herself up rigidly as Anna Sclamowsky came toward our bench, and, amid deafening applause, laid her finger upon the Anstruther diamonds. The clapping and noise produced no effect upon the girl. She stood motionless as though she had been a statue, her hand still upon the necklace.

Whether Aunt Phœbe was aggravated by the complete success of the experiment or annoyed at having

been obliged to take so prominent a part in it, I do not know, but she certainly was a good deal out of temper, for when Sclamowsky made his way to where his daughter was standing, she said, in tones of icy disapproval, which must have been audible for a long way down the room:

"A very clever piece of imposture, sir."

The mesmerist's face flushed and his eyes flashed angrily. He, however, bowed low.

"There's nothing so hard," he said, "to overcome, madam, as prejudice. I fear you have been inconvenienced by my daughter's hand. I will now release her—and you."

So saying, he placed his own hand for a moment over his daughter's and breathed lightly on the girl's face. Instantly the muscles relaxed, her hand fell to her side, and I could hear her give a little shuddering sigh, apparently of relief.

I noticed, too, that, whether by design or accident, Sclamowsky kept his hand for a moment longer on my aunt's necklace, and as he took his finger away, I fancied that he looked at her fixedly for a second, and muttered something either to himself or her, the meaning of which I could not catch.

"What did he say to you?" I asked, as Sclamowsky, after removing the bandage from his daughter's eyes, assisted her to remount the stage.

Aunt Phœbe looked a little confused and dazed, and her hand went up to her necklace, as though to reassure herself of its safety.

"Say to me?" she repeated, rousing herself as though by an effort; "he said nothing to me. But I think, Elizabeth, if it is the same to you, we will go home; the heat of the room has made me feel a little dizzy."

We heard next day that we had missed the best part of the entertainment by leaving when we did, and that many and far more wonderful experiments were successfully attempted; but I had no time to waste in vain regrets for not having been present, for I was much taken up with Aunt Phœbe.

I was really anxious about her, she was so strangely unlike her calm, equable self. All Saturday she was

restless and irritable, wandering half-way up-stairs, and then, as though she had forgotten what she wanted, returned to the drawing-room, where she set to work opening old cabinet drawers, looking under chairs and sofas, tumbling everything out of her work-box as if in search of something, and snubbing me for my pains when I offered to help her.

This went on all day, and I had almost made up my mind to send for Dr. Perkins, when, after late dinner, she suddenly sank into an arm-chair with a look of relief.

"I know what it is," she said; "it is my diamonds!"

"Your diamonds, Aunt Phœbe!" I exclaimed. "Why, I locked them up for you myself in your dressing-box when we came home last night!"

"Are you sure, Elizabeth?" she asked, with an anxious, worried expression.

"Quite sure," I answered; "but if it will satisfy you, I will bring down your dressing-box now and let you see."

"Do, there's a dear child! I declare I feel too tired to move another step."

I was not surprised at this, considering how she had been fussing about all day, and I ran up to her bedroom, brought down her rosewood dressing-box, and placed it on the table in front of her.

I was greatly struck by the nervous trembling of her fingers as she chose out the right key from among the others in her bunch, and the shaky way in which she fitted it into the lock. Even when she had turned the key she seemed half-afraid to raise the lid, so I did it for her, and, taking out the first tray, lifted out the morocco case which contained the heirlooms and laid it in her lap.

Aunt Phœbe tremblingly touched the spring; the case flew open and disclosed the diamonds lying snugly on their bed of blue velvet. She took them out and looked at them lovingly, held them up so they might catch the light from the lamp, and then with a sigh replaced them in their case and shut it with a snap.

I waited for a few minutes, then, as she did not speak, I put out my hand for the case, intending to replace it in the dressing-box and take it up-stairs. But

Aunt Phœbe clinched it tightly, staggered to her feet, and said in a husky, unnatural voice: "No, I must take it myself."

"Why, you said you were too tired," I began, but before I could finish my sentence she had left the room, and I heard her going up-stairs and opening the door of her bedroom.

Some few minutes afterward I heard her steps once more on the stairs, and I waited, expecting her every moment to open the drawing-room door and walk in; but to my astonishment I heard her pass by, and a moment afterward the clang of the front door as it was hastily shut told me that Aunt Phœbe had left the house.

"She must be mad!" I exclaimed to myself as I rushed to the hall, seized up the first hat I could see, flung a shawl over my shoulders, and tore off in pursuit of my runaway relative.

It was quite dark, but I caught sight of her as she passed by a lamp-post. She was walking quickly, more quickly than I had ever seen her walk before, and with evidently some set purpose in her mind. I ran after her as fast as I could, and came up with her as she was turning down a small dark lane, leading, as I knew, to a little court, the home of a very poor but respectable section of the inhabitants of Bishopsthorpe.

"Aunt Phœbe," I gasped, as I touched her arm, "where are you going? You must be making a mistake!"

"No! no!" she cried with a feverish impatience in her voice. "I am right! Quite right! You must not stop me!" and she quickened her pace into a halting run.

I saw clearly that there was nothing to be done but to follow her and try to keep her out of actual harm's way, for there now seemed to be no manner of doubt that my poor aunt was, for the time at any rate, insane. So I fell back a pace, and, never appearing even to notice that I had left her side, she pursued her course.

Suddenly she stopped short, crossed the street, and stumbled up the uneven stone steps of a shabby-looking house, whose front door was wide open. Without a moment's hesitation she entered the dark hall, and I followed closely at her heels. Up the squalid, dirty

stairs she hurried, and, without knocking, opened a door on the left-hand side of the first landing and went in.

I was a few steps behind, but as I gained the threshold I saw her take a parcel from beneath her cloak and hold it out to a man who came to meet her from the far end of the badly-lighted room.

"I have brought them," I heard my aunt say in the same curious, husky voice I had noticed before.

As the man came nearer and stood where the light of the evil-smelling little paraffin lamp fell upon his features, I recognized in the heavy jaw, the bull-neck, and the close-cropped head the Prof. Dmitri Sclamowsky of the previous evening. Our eyes met, and I thought I detected a sort of not altogether pleasant surprise; but if this were so he recovered himself quickly and, bowing low, said:

"I had not expected the pleasure of your company, madam, but as you have done me the honor of coming, I am glad that you should be here to witness the conclusion of last night's experiment. This lady," he continued, pointing to my aunt, who still stood with fixed, apparently unseeing eyes, holding out the parcel toward him—"this lady, you will remember, considered the hypnotic phenomena exhibited at last night's entertainment as a clever imposture — those were the words, I think. To one who, like myself, is an enthusiast on the subject, such words were hard, nay, impossible, to bear. It was necessary to prove to her that the power I possess"—here his blue eyes gleamed with the same metallic light I had before noticed—"is something more than conjuring; something more than a 'clever imposture.' You will see now."

As he spoke he stretched out his hand and took the parcel from my aunt, and as he did so I recognized with horror the morocco case which I knew contained the heirlooms.

"Who are these for?" he said, addressing Aunt Phœbe.

"For you," came from my aunt's lips, but her eyes were fixed and her voice seemed to come with difficulty.

"She is mad!" I exclaimed. "She does not know what she is saying!"

Sclamowsky smiled.

"And who am I?" he continued.

"The professor Dmitri Sclamowsky."

"And what is this?" indicating the morocco case.

"My diamonds."

"You make them a present to me?"

"Yes."

Sclamowsky opened the case and took out the jewels.

"A handsome present, certainly!" he said, turning to me with a smile.

I was speechless. There was something so horrible in my dear Aunt Phœbe's set face and wide-open, stony eyes, something so weird in the dim room, with its one miserable lamp; something so mockingly fiendish in Sclamowsky's glittering eyes as he stood with the diamonds flashing and twinkling in his hands, that, though I strove for utterance, I could not succeed in articulating a single word.

"Enough!" at last he said, replacing the diamonds in their case and closing it sharply—"the experiment is concluded," and so saying, he stepped up close to Aunt Phœbe and made two or three passes with his hands in front of her face. A quiver ran all over my aunt's figure. She swayed and would have fallen if I had not rushed forward and caught her in my arms.

She looked round at me with terror and bewilderment in every feature.

"Where am I, Elizabeth?" she stammered, and then looking round, she caught sight of Sclamowsky. "What is the meaning of this?"

"Never mind, Aunt Phœbe," I said. "Come home, and I will tell you all about it."

Aunt Phœbe passed her hand over her eyes, and as she did so I glanced inquiringly from Sclamowsky's face to the jewelry case in his hands. What was to be the end of it all? I had certainly heard my aunt distinctly give this man her diamonds as a present, but could a gift made under such circumstances hold good for a moment? He evidently saw the query in my face.

"You judge me even more hastily than did your aunt," he said. "She called me an impostor; you think me a rogue and a swindler. Here are your jewels, madam," he said, turning to Aunt Phœbe. "I am more than satisfied."

This graphic account of a fight in the Australian bush, in which a dog was the hero, is from the New York *Sunday World*.

THE AUSTRALIAN'S STORY.

I HAD just finished reading for the twentieth time my last letter from home when a sudden growl from Bouncer, our station dog, brought me back from the dream into which I was beginning to fall and made me drop my letter, look hastily round, and then walk to the door of the hut. But all was as it should be. Nothing unusual was to be seen in any direction. The sun was sinking blood-red behind a range of dim blue hills and stars were beginning to show on the paling sky.

Long Ridge Station was a very solitary spot indeed, even at the best of times; but just at present, when Long Peter and I were its only occupants, the loneliness of our position was horrible. I don't think Peter felt it as I did. He was a tall, gaunt Scotchman, who had been a shepherd in his native land. I had come out from a full nest—a happy home; and the awful monotony of the Australian wilds seemed sometimes more than I could bear.

For a month at least Long Peter and I had shared the work and the danger between us; he, as the most experienced, going out with the sheep, while I kept the hut, cooked the food, and attended to the various duties.

On this particular day I had been feeling an amount of listless weariness which I could scarcely understand myself; but the fact was that nervous depression so overpowered me that when Bouncer rose up from my feet with a growl, I started as though some terrible danger was close at hand. I walked to the door of the hut, as I have said, and looked keenly all around, but could not see anything unusual. Still Bouncer knew what he was about; he never growled without having something to show for it. I therefore walked back to my faithful companion, and, taking his muzzle in both my hands, "What is it, Bouncer, my boy?" I said. "Is it friend or foe? Almost any one would be welcome in this dreary solitude."

Bouncer had risen to his feet, and was listening intently. Again he growled; no, not growled, but whined impatiently, and trotted to the door. Then I knew that whoever might be approaching was no enemy, but a friend. Yet who could it be? Long Peter and his sheep were not due yet for nearly an hour; and I need scarcely say that afternoon visitors were scarce at Long Ridge. I followed Bouncer to the door of the hut, and, shading my eyes with my hand, looked earnestly toward the west, which was the direction in which the dog was looking. Presently the quick though muffled fall of a horse's hoofs became distinctly audible. I knew the canter well; it was that of Blackfoot, the splendid riding-horse belonging to Mr. Ashby, the owner of the station. Yes, there he was, cantering over the waving grass and making straight for Long Ridge. "Good-afternoon, Jem," he said in his usual pleasant manner. "Give me a light for my pipe and a morsel to eat, for I must be off again directly. Any news going? Long Peter is not home yet, I suppose?"

Even as Mr. Ashby spoke we could recognize the bleating of the flock and could dimly see the white fleeces of the sheep as they emerged from the sombre shadows of the trees. "Ay, there they come," said the master, in a relieved tone of voice; "and now, after a few words with Peter, I can mount and be off. I ought to be at home before it is quite dark. Jem," he added impressively, "I came to-day to warn you and Peter that there are blacks in the neighborhood. They have been lurking round the home station for several days, and they mean mischief, too, for their women are not with them. I would have sent Sam and Jerry here to help you and Peter, but it is impossible now to do so; my wife and children must be protected, and we need all the hands we have. I hope your guns are in good order? Do you want powder or lead?"

"We have enough of both," I replied, "but we have only half a dozen bullets. I'll run them to-morrow." This I said with a flush of shame rising to my cheek, for had not Peter asked me that very morning to run the bullets? Yet I had spent the long summer day

listlessly reading letters, because, forsooth, I saw no immediate need of the bullets; and now, thanks to my carelessness, we were practically unarmed.

Mr. Ashby did not seem to observe my embarrassment, for he was standing at the door impatiently waiting for Peter; he had, however, heard my words, for he replied immediately, "Don't put off anything till to-morrow, Jem; fetch the mould, and get the bullets run at once; then go to the water-hole and bring as many buckets full as you can stow away in the hut."

Even as he spoke, Peter and his flocks arrived, the animals feeding quietly all the way along. "Good-evening, sir," said Long Peter quietly to his master. "I've had some trouble with the beasts to-day; three are missing. I found the body of one of them. It had been speared."

Mr. Ashby looked full at the man, consternation clearly written in his face. "Are they so near us as that, Peter?" he said. "I must get home to-night; I only came to warn you and Jem."

"I don't think that you can possibly go, sir," responded the shepherd, coolly filling a pannikin of tea; "they are too close to us."

We looked at the man inquiringly; his face was pale but resolute-looking, and his voice sank to a whisper as he added: "After seeing the spear-wound in the sheep I looked about me pretty sharp, you may be sure, but I saw nothing till I was just clear of the timber, then I sighted one of the blacks wriggling through the grass like a snake. I would have fired at him, but I saw another, then another, so I thought it best to return and warn Jem. They did not guess that I had seen them, or I would have had a spear through my back. As it is, I expect they will attack us to-night."

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth when a spear whizzed through the open doorway and quivered in the wooden slabs behind. Had my two companions been as inexperienced as I was, all would now have been confusion and dismay, but both the master and Long Peter were old colonists, and had had more than one brush with the natives. They were both as cool as possible.

"Bar the door, Jem," said the shepherd, "and hand me the powder-flask and bullets. Here, Bouncer, keep to heel, good dog."

With a feeling more akin to agony than I had ever known before I handed the powder-flask to my fellow-servant, at the same time telling him that I had forgotten all about the bullets and that only half a dozen remained on hand.

He just gave me one glance, partly indignation, partly pity. "Then we are all up a tree," he said; "however, let us do our best; two bullets to each of us, Jem, and we'll stand by each other."

The good old fellow! I saw by his face that he felt for me in the agony of remorse I was enduring and did not mean to make it worse for me by his reproaches. Yet Long Peter had a wife at home among the heather mountains, and a daughter, a curl of whose golden hair I had often seen in his pocket-book. Ah, Long Peter could not afford to die yet!

Meanwhile, Mr. Ashby was coolly reconnoitring through the loop-holes; he had let down the window, and was preparing for action as calmly as the shepherd. We had handed him his two bullets, but he pushed them back; he had a few of his own. "Take them, take them," he whispered; "you will need them all." And truly we did. By this time the moon had risen, its light gradually growing on the landscape till we could see the outlines of the trees, and the long grass waving white in the ghostly shadows; but all was silent—nothing but the hoarse cry of some night-bird broke on the stillness around. Oh, how long was it to last, this dreadful silence and inaction? For myself I must confess that every pulse in my body was beating like a sledge-hammer, every nerve quivering till I could scarcely hold my rifle. But the master and Peter knelt as quietly as though no danger were to be apprehended, their barrels pointed through the loop-holes, while they closely watched for any movement outside.

But there was none. The sheep were camping quietly round the hurdles, the night wind swept with a mournful sound through the dark trees, causing the spectral tracery of the branches to dance in the moonlight on the grass; but that was all—still the terrible

silence. But suddenly there was a change; three or four of the sheep rose, looked all round, stamped with their feet, and huddled close together. Something had alarmed them, some sight or sound as yet unrevealed to our blunter faculties. Bouncer rose to his feet, too, whining uneasily.

"Down, dog, down!" whispered Peter, breaking the silence for the first time; and the docile animal once more sank to the ground.

The next moment a loud report rang out into a thousand echoes. Peter had fired the first shot, a shrill death-scream following it, while we could dimly see the dark figure of a man who leaped from his ambush and fell like a clod to the ground.

"Now, master," cried Long Peter, while rapidly reloading his gun, "fire away, but aim to the right, sir, aim to the right. I can see the cursed creatures gathering there in numbers."

Mr. Ashby obeyed the directions given him by his servant, for in truth Long Peter had a fuller view than any of us of what was going on outside.

"There, you are all right!" he added exultantly, as both Mr. Ashby's gun and mine were fired at the same moment. "You have each fixed your man, and the others are drawing off for a little. But, mark my words, sir," he added, "though they are mortally afraid of our guns, they'll find out soon enough that our ammunition is running short, then they will fire the hut, and we are done for! Sir, I mean to get Bouncer to help us."

"The dog?" asked Mr. Ashby, inquiringly. "I don't understand. What can he do? They will certainly kill him if you let him out!"

"So they will, if they can catch him," replied the shepherd, composedly; "but we must take our chance of that, sir. If you will write a line to the head station, telling them what a fix we are in, I reckon that my dog will carry the letter there in less time than a thoroughbred horse could do it. I have taught him, sir, to fetch and carry, little thinking that at some time our lives might depend upon him doing it. Please write the letter, sir."

"But will he go to the head station with it?" re-

plied the master, who was busily writing; "how can you get him to understand?"

"Leave that to me, sir," replied Long Peter; "the dog is as wise as any Christian, and a deal wiser than many. Besides, I have a waistcoat here belonging to Jerry; if I show him that, it is all right. He loves Jerry, and knows that he is at the head station. The only difficulty is, will the black fellows wait long enough before they fire the hut, so as to allow of help coming? It is doubtful, but we can only try. We are in God's hands, sir."

"True," replied Mr. Ashby, as he handed the letter to his faithful servant. The master said no more, but I could see that his heart was full. Ah, his dear wife, his blue-eyed little ones! Would he ever see them more?

There was certainly no time to lose. I could see the dark figures of the natives dodging round the hut, evidently thinking that since we had ceased firing our ammunition must be totally expended; but it was not so, we had each of us one bullet left, but only one, which we were keeping for emergencies, or for the final scrimmage. Meanwhile Long Peter had pulled away a half-rotten slab from behind his bunk, thus making a hole sufficiently large for Bouncer to creep through. He then fastened the letter securely to his collar, the noble animal giving now and then a suppressed whine and trembling from head to foot with anxiety. He had smelt at Jerry's waistcoat, and quite understood what was expected of him. I could not bear to look at Long Peter at this moment; his features were working with emotion, and I could have sworn that there were tears in his eyes, but he said nothing. Everything being now ready he led Bouncer to the hole, held his muzzle for a moment pressed hard between his hands, while he gazed into the creature's expressive eyes. "Now go, good dog," he whispered; and squeezing himself through the hole Bouncer sped away on noiseless feet.

We listened intently for a few minutes; oh, how we listened! our faces blanched and our limbs trembling. Had Bouncer escaped on his weighty errand without being discovered? A sudden wild jabbering rose on the night air, a rush of many feet, and the next instant we detected a yelp of pain.

"They have surely speared him!" whispered Mr. Ashby.

But Long Peter turned on him almost in anger. "No, no, sir," he said; 'he is just scratched. He'll do it yet, I know he will!"

"He must be quick then," replied the master, "for those cursed savages have struck a light somehow; they mean to burn us out—look!"

Our eyes were now intently watching from the loop-holes the movements of the black fellows, and we had not watched long till we saw a flaming brand whizzing through the air, and falling upon the stringy bark roof above our heads. Another and another immediately followed, still it did not seem to us that any of them had taken effect.

"Carry up a bucket of water through the trap-door and pour it over the roof," whispered the master to me; "but take care of yourself, don't let them see you."

I did as I was directed, and thoroughly drenched the roof, but while thus engaged I heard a shout from below. It was Mr. Ashby's voice.

"Come down, Jem; come quickly," he cried, and I rattled down the ladder with a sinking heart. Long Peter lay on the floor of the hut white and gasping; a spear had entered one of the loop-holes and pinned him through the thigh. In response to my groan of utter dismay, he struggled into a sitting posture.

"Never mind me, Jem," he said: "fight it out to the last. Take my gun, there is one charge in it yet; but first drag me into that corner."

I obeyed in silence, handed him a pannikin of cold tea, and then took my place by Mr. Ashby's side. "Look out," he whispered. "I mean to fire at their ringleader—that man with the blazing log in his hand —I fear he has already fired the roof. I hear it crackling; but it scarcely matters now, the end is not far off. We are doomed." As he spoke these despairing words Mr. Ashby fired, his bullet bringing down the man aimed at, who, with a wild screech, fell to the ground.

There was a pause of consternation after this, and hurried talk among the savages outside; then, with wild yells, the whole force of the besiegers rushed on our little garrison. A moment's surging round the

door, then it gave way with a crash; Mr. Ashby's gun swung on the crowd of savages with terrific force, felling two of them like oxen. I can scarcely describe what followed. There was a wild struggle with our guns and our fists; then two black fellows forced me to the ground; one was shortening his grasp of his spear to drive it through my body, when he suddenly fell on the top of me dead, felled by the butt end of Mr. Ashby's gun. But I knew little more; dimly I seemed to hear a loud hurrah from outside, followed by the crack of rifles; then every sound died away into utter silence.

"Well, I declare, you have had a bit of a scrimmage, and here's poor Jem about done for!" It was the voice of Jerry, who was dragging away the dead body of my assailant from off my chest.

"No, I am not dead," I said feebly enough, "not even wounded, though half-choked with blood that is not my own. Where is the master? and, oh, go and look after Long Peter! he is terribly hurt, I know."

"The other chaps are attending to him," said Jerry, "and as for the master he says he is all right, and won't own to a single scratch; he is a game one, he is. We'll have y. all carried to the home station afore breakfast-time, see if we don't. But you should have seen that dog of Peter's. Why, his feet was all skinned and raw, and he had an ugly spear wound in his shoulder, so that the letter was covered with blood. We could scarcely make it out; but we guessed quick enough that there was something amiss, and came away at once. We were just in time, Jem, my boy."

"Didn't I tell ye as Bouncer would do it?" cried Long Peter, in rather a weak and quavering voice; "poor old chap," he added, tenderly, as the faithful brute limped across the hut at the sound of the shepherd's voice and crept close to his side. "You and me will never part, Bouncer, never, as long as we live." And they never did part till seven years later, when, in extreme old age, Bouncer died and was buried in a grave dug for him by Long Peter himself. "Ah," he said, when the ceremony was over, "why do them faithful brutes die so soon? I'll never see his like again; he was as wise as any Christian, and a deal more faithful than many."